Ready For The Mayhem

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My Favourite Bnha stories to read, Bakuwife & Crossover Husbands, Books Read - Not Completed (MHA), SakurAlpha's Fic Rec of Pure how did you create this you amazing bean, ~ angry pomeranian approved ~, ♀ coppia di tesori ♀, THE 🎵 UBIQ □ ☠ THE 🎭 UNIQUE 🏵

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Ready For The Mayhem

by Marbel

Summary

Bakugou Katsuki was ready to start his hero training at UA but he has a few secrets.

One, in order to save up enough to escape his suffocating household, he had built a flourishing career as the supermodel Victoire under his parents' noses with some...*unconventional* help.

Two, he was dating a man by the name of Xanxus—who was a notorious member of the most powerful mafia family in the world.

Spanish Translation (Translated by Vielka)

Notes

WARNING: KHR manga spoilers

Yes, I am at it again. I love crossover and crack pairings way too much. This pairing was suggested by the lovely Fox23 :)

Chapter 1

1

The world of fashion was a cutthroat place but recently, one single girl has been taking it by the storm. She was young, only fifteen. Her hair was blond with a platinum shine and she had eyes like rubies glistening under the silvery moonlight. Some even said she looked like the established Japanese model Bakugou Mitsuki.

Her name is Victoire C Quattro. It was obviously a stage name but just like her name suggested, she was a champion and an explosive one at it.

She was born for the spotlight and the camera, gaining followers and fans across the globe like a hurricane swiping through the continents. However, she doesn't go on many interviews. Even when she got interviewed, her answers were always short and professional. Off camera, she rarely interacted with fans or smiled either. But she did have a large social media presence and people loved every bit of info she (or her professional PR team) shared.

Although some thought she was an arrogant and cold hearted bitch, endorsements and sponsors were still crazy for her. Not just because she was pretty. No. The fashion industry had more than enough pretty faces, they were crazy for her because of both her talent *and* the mystery and scandals surrounding her.

Rumours travel fast and rumours surrounding *important* people sold even faster.

In the underground society, there was nothing more important than Vongola. So when Xanxus, the son of the current Godfather of the underground world, showed up at a gala with Victoire at his side, people started speculating. Whispers of who she was and how she managed to ensnare Xanxus's heart spread far and wide within both the light and dark sides of society.

While normal people only knew the Vongolas for their wealth and influence, those associated with the mafia knew that Xanxus was not a man to be messed with. He wasn't just some low ranked lackey within Vongola. No, he was the son of Vongola Nono and a formidable fighter. Not to mention, Xanxus was also the head of Varia, an independent elite assassination squad filled with madmen who

thirsted for violence. It went without saying that Xanxus was someone to be feared if he could keep all these maniacs under control. Ruthless and egotistic, Xanxus controlled Varia with an iron fist and devious intellects.

So no, this wasn't a gentle man with a kind heart and a good soul. Xanxus was mafia through and through. He was cruel and merciless with a heart colder than stones. In addition, he also had a short temper that accompanied his violent tendencies. Thus, even though he was a handsome muscular man with tanned skin, dark lush hair, and sharp features, not a lot of people had the guts to approach him.

Xanxus also didn't have much patience to entertain the thought of romance either. The last time someone tried to get on his good side by offering him a prized beauty, Xanxus blasted both the bastard and the poor woman out into the pouring rain.

Naturally, everyone got curious when they saw Xanxus with a girl. A *younger* girl who was a model. Xanxus was still as cocky as ever when he stepped onto the red carpet but he slowed down his pace to match the blond girl. She was in a dark blue dress that matched Xanxus's suit and she didn't look scared at all as she held her head high.

People caught bits and pieces of them together later on too. Paparazzi catching them having dinner together at a high end restaurant, the boss of a smaller mafia family seeing Xanxus helping the girl try on a pearl necklace in a jewelry shop...things like these got people betting on how long she would last by his side. The ones harboring more malice and jealousy even suggested under the table that she might not live to see the day of her eighteenth birthday. After all, Xanxus had an unpredictable mood.

Love? Impossible! This was *Xanxus*, a tyrant who installed terror and bloodshed everywhere he went. No one doubted that he would get bored and dump Victoire at one point.

Nonetheless, everybody who was anybody knew the name of Victoire C Quattro now.

2

Sawada Tsunayoshi (AKA Tsuna) was nervous and scared. He was just a regular middle schooler who was wimpy and a complete klutz but one day a baby showed up and claimed that Tsuna was the heir to the biggest and most powerful mafia family in the world. Things happened and his life had been turned upside down but Tsuna also

gained many friends along the way.

But just as he thought his life couldn't get any weirder, he and his friends were suddenly casted into a battle of life and death with Vonogla's most notorious assassins. Their leader, Xanxus, didn't approve of Tsuna being the future boss and challenged him for the throne.

Xanxus and his crew were intimidating and it was obvious they didn't come in good faith. Tsuna was scared of getting hurt and dying. He didn't want to fight but there wasn't an alternative solution either.

But he was still confused by the turn of events. He knew that Varia was a group of misfits and lunatics but he was still just as lost as everyone else on his side when he saw the model, Victoire (or "Vicky" as her fans called her), waiting by the area for the rain guardians' battle.

She was as dazzling in real life as she was on TV. Tsuna had seen her on the covers of well known magazines and the girls in his class talked about her lots too. Just like in the magazines, she had blonde hair and eyes like blood. For some eerie reason, those red eyes reminded Tsuna of Xanxus's. She was dressed in a white blouse with wide sleeves and a grey skirt. Her leather boots with heels were decorated with silver spikes.

"Hey, it's not safe to be here!" Tsuna yelled at her. They were about to have a match to the death here and it wouldn't be good to drag innocent people into this mess. But Victoire didn't acknowledge him.

And she was walking *towards* Varia.

Tsuna could feel his heart climbing up his throat.

But Squalo only patted her on the shoulder as she moved past the silver haired swordsman. "Voi, what are you doing here?"

"How the fuck should I know? Aren't you the one who texted me and said it was an emergency?" The cursing surprised everyone on Tsuna's side. Her voice...it was also deeper than what Tsuna imagined it would be.

"What do you mean? I didn't contact you." Squalo frowned but then he turned around and yelled at his teammates, "VOIII! Which one of you idiots took my phone again?"

He also waved off the Cervellos (judges for the battles) and said the blond model was a speculator just like Reborn, Tsuna's teacher.

"Ushishishi…" Bel laughed in his usual creepy way. His voice was a bit strained since he was gravely injured from his battle last night. "I sent the text."

Squalo hit him on the head and since the prince was injured, he didn't manage to dodge it.

"You look like shit," Victoire said to Belphegor after sizing him up. "The fuck you call me here for? I got school tomorrow you jackass."

"Boss is in a bad mood." Then he proceeded to pull out a big red bow and placed it in Victoire's hair. He then pushed her towards Xanxus and the girl bumped into the man's chest. Tsuna didn't know yet but in the future, he would learn from Belphegor that the fastest way to deal with Xanxus's bad moods was to throw the blond model at him. It doesn't guarantee that they'd be off the hook completely but at least they'd live. "Here you go Boss, a present for you."

Tsuna let out a strangled noise from his throat. The dark haired man with red eyes and scars on his face was a terrifying and violent person. He was scared that Xanxus might just blast the girl to bits in a rage. He turned to look at Reborn but his teacher just looked thoughtful.

"Wait, the ring battles? That's tonight?" Victoire lifted her head to meet Xanxus's eyes.

"Don't you have eyes, trash?" Xanxus huffed but he didn't hit her or push her away. He also glared at Tsuna's side.

"So the rumors are true?" Reborn mused as he sat on top of Dino's shoulder. "I guess being a romantic is in the DNA of all Italian men."

Xanxus promptly ignored him. The battle for the rain ring began shortly after and everyone was focused on the battle. Still, they couldn't help but feel to be in awe when Victoire dropped herself in Xanxus's lap.

That took courage.

"She's...really close with Xanxus?" Tsuna wasn't sure how he should even start this conversation.

"Isn't it obvious that she's Xanxus's lover?" Reborn said to his student.

The baby hitman also pulled up one of those tabloid celebrity articles on his phone to show him. “Also, that’s a he, Dame-Tsuna. You need more lessons to sharpen your observation skills.”

“Eh????”

Tsuna and his friends all let out different forms of a surprised and shocked noise. They couldn’t believe that the famous model was actually a boy! And he was dating Xanxus? *The* Xanxus?

The head of a group of elite assassins. The man who tried to overthrow his adopted father and took on the wrath of all of Vongola. The one who wouldn’t bat an eye to shoot Tsuna and his friends in the head. *That* Xanxus?

Also, who in their right minds would want to be with such a tyrant?

The mafia world really was just filled with a full variety of interesting people wasn’t it? None of them were too shocked by the age difference though, since there was also Reborn and Bianchi. And appearance was very confusing in this day and age of blossoming quirks. For all they knew, Victoire could be over 30 years old!

“He’s not mafia,” Reborn said as if reading Tsuna’s mind. “At least I haven’t heard about him before.”

Even better. Someone not mafia was crazy enough to be dating Xanxus. Society really was losing it wasn’t it?

They mainly kept their eyes on the rain battle afterwards. It didn’t look like Victoire was interested in the battle too much since he kept his eyes on his phone while Xanxus played with his blond locks. It wasn’t until the battle was over and Yamamoto won that they remembered Victoire was still there.

The rain battle had occurred inside a makeshift aquarium inside the school. There were rubble and broken pipes everywhere while the water was rapidly rising within the sealed space. Sharks swam around, waiting for their chances to strike.

Yamamoto had tried to carry the immobile Squalo out of there but he was also too badly injured to do so. Just as a giant shark was about to swallow the silver haired assassin up, something sharp stabbed into it. It trashed about violently as blood gushed out and dripped into the water. A figure moved past Yamamoto and the next thing Tsuna saw on the screen was a spiked heel sinking into the shark’s side and

kicking it right into the wall. The beast of the sea crashed into concrete and flopped down into the water. Within a second or two, all they saw was a pool of red tainting the surface of the water.

“Bunch of idiots,” Victoire scuffed as he stood beside Squalo, who was lying on the wet ground. A thin, long needle-like blade spun between his slender fingers. “Are you dead yet, long hair?”

“Fucking brat…you’re tainting my honour…” Squalo coughed through a mouthful of blood. “I lost. You should have let me die.”

“Letting your ass die on me taints *my* reputation. What would people think if I lost someone before I even got my damn license?” Victoire hauled him off the ground despite being much smaller than the grown man. “It’s better to trash your rep than mine. You can die in a corner where I can’t see later.”

If Squalo hadn’t passed out, he might have responded with a middle finger.

“Reborn,” Tsuna pointed to the model who just killed a shark with ease. From the looks of it, it wasn’t the first time Victoire had used a deadly weapon. He could feel his lips twitching. He knew shouldn’t have believed a single word that came out from his hellish teacher’s mouth! “That’s your definition of ‘not mafia’?”

“Shishishi, the princess would’ve been our cloud if he didn’t have other ambitions,” Belphegor explained from their side. A cloud…Hibri-senpai’s face came to mind and Tsuna shuddered slightly.

“Don’t call me a princess, you shitty prince!” Victoire came out and shoved Squalo to Levi. He was also wet and the white fabric of his shirt clung to his body like a second layer of skin. Since the fabric was thin too, it was easy to see the shade of creamy skin underneath it. Tsuna knew he shouldn’t be blushing but…well, he could only avert his eyes away because he thought he saw the faint outline of a bra underneath.

…Do guys need bras too? Wait, why is there a curve to his chest if he’s a guy?

Reborn bonked him on the head with a hammer to wake him out of it.

Victoire stood in front of Xanxus, whose expression was dark. His thin lips pulled into a tight line and the scars on his face looked even more menacing.

“You’re too soft as always,” he said with distaste. Xanxus raised a gun against the blond.

“And you’re still a dickhead,” the blond snapped back at him while toying with the blade in his hand.

“Trash belongs in the landfill.”

“Some trash is recyclable.”

They glared at each other, both had their backs straight and heads held high, showing that neither side was going to back down first. After a few minutes of strong tension and horribly uncomfortable silence, Xanxus’s eyebrows knitted into a tight knot as a low grumble of annoyance rumbled in the back of his throat. He threw his jacket over Victoire’s shoulders and turned to walk away. His men followed behind him while Victoire rolled his eyes. Levi also dragged Squalo along.

Victoire pulled the larger jacket around himself and followed. Tsuna thought he saw the blond glowering at him slightly as if he wasn’t too fond of him either. The middle schooler didn’t know what he did to piss the other teen off but judging from how close the blond was with Xanxus, maybe he didn’t think Tsuna had a right to inherit either.

“It looks like Xanxus found his match,” Reborn called as he hopped onto his student’s shoulder. “A very mafia couple, don’t you think?”

Indeed.

“Well, Tsuna, as the future boss you have to best the other candidates in all aspects. That includes your partner too so keep that in mind.”

Hell no.

Tsuna imagined Kyoko wielding knives and kicking ass…um, yeah, he didn’t think for a second that he could handle that.

“So you want to tell me what is going on with that joke of a battle?” the blond teenage model asked after he had dried off in the hotel that Varia was using as their temporary base. There was only Xanxus and him in the room so he kicked off his heeled boots as well. He could feel the soft fur of the carpet underneath his feet as he walked closer to the guy he was supposedly dating. In his opinion, they kind of were

but it was an on and off thing since he literally hadn't seen the dude in eight years. That great Don of the mafia world had sealed his son in a block of ice. They just reconnected recently and the feelings were still ambiguous at best.

Xanxus was sitting in an expensive looking armchair with a drink in his hand. His shirt was unbuttoned, revealing a toned chest and muscular abs that held patches of scars. "You saw what happened, the trash lost."

"Yeah, try again." Victoire took the glass of vodka out of Xanxus's hand, earning himself a glare but he only scoffed. "You really expect me to fucking believe that Long Hair and Drag Mohawks lost to middle schoolers who haven't killed before? I'd believe you more if you said Endeavor beat All Might in the popularity poll."

"It's none of your business." Xanxus grabbed the nearest thing on the table next to him, which was a thick book, and hurled it at the other person in the room. The blond dodged and the book slammed heavily into the wall behind him.

"You are acting like an angry spoiled brat," the blond hissed.

Xanxus lifted a sneer. "And you're being a nosy bitch."

Victoire set the alcohol somewhere further away. His red eyes landed on the scars on the mafia assassin's body. They looked like old wounds. Ugly patches of skin darker than normal scattered across Xanxus's skin. They were the lasting side effects of being encased in ice for years. He sighed in exasperation. "You really aren't going to tell me what's actually happening? I might have declined to be your cloud but I'm still on your side, dumbass."

Xanxus clenched his fist and there was a heated glow of light shimmering underneath the skin of his palms. Shadows casted over his features and the tension in his jaw only seemed to grow denser as the scars on his body expanded.

"The old bastard said the Tenth's generation needed a push," Xanxus's voice was low and there was a dark tone behind his words. He fell back into silence after that.

But he didn't need to explain any further.

Vongola Nono had no intention of naming Xanxus, his adopted son, as heir even though all of the biological sons were dead. No, according to

traditions, only those with the Vongola blood could inherit. And the elders of Vongola would rather choose the descendant of a forgotten bloodline, a *civilian* who grew up with no knowledge of the mafia world to inherit instead of Xanxus, who had been training for the position all his life.

But a civilian child wouldn't be able to win the favor of the majority in the family and their allies without producing some kind of results first. What better way to put that kid on a high pedestal than have him defeat Xanxus and the Varia? Vonogla Nono had a script and he was willing to sacrifice the Varia as the stepping stone. An assassination squad who lost to middle schoolers? Fuck it, they were going to be the joke of the century.

But Varia wasn't what it used to be. Not with Xanxus gone for so long and the coup eight years ago was a failure. Vongola Nono could have ordered to have all of their heads any second. Varia had received its share of punishments during these years. Some of their authorities had been stripped away and the missions they received only got more dangerous with each passing month. Victoire would know because he personally *helped* the Varia completed some of those missions.

This was a trade off. One silly act in exchange for wiping the slate clean. Xanxus would still be in charge of Varia and his loyal commanders would keep their heads too.

Victoire placed a hand on Xanxus's face, his thumb carefully brushing by the menacing scars. "It's a trap."

"I know," Xanxus answered as he closed his eyes. He could feel a warm body pressing up to his and he leaned back into the cushions of his chair. Vongola Nono might have set the rules for the battle of the rings but there was still a chance for him. Xanxus didn't plan on going down without a fight. His old man said he could never be recognized as the next Don but he wasn't about to give up.

Maybe, just maybe the rings would acknowledge him as the true heir.

He would be a much better mafia boss than some random teenager off the streets who had never held a gun in their life before. It didn't matter that this society placed more emphasis on the roles of heroes and villains, the mafia still had good control over a large portion of Italy and Xanxus knew how to play the political games when he wanted to. He was a leader. He was going to be the one true king of the underground world. No hero was going to change that.

He peered down and saw a pair of fiery red eyes just a shade brighter than his own.

“Like I said back at the rain battle, you’re all a bunch of idiots.” The blond in his lap tapped a finger along Xanxus’s adam’s apple with a disapproving *tsk* of his tongue. He then jabbed at Xanxus’s chest. “But if you give up halfway I'll explode your ass so go get that other half of the damn ring.”

“Do you even know what those rings mean?” Xanxus didn’t think any of his men or himself explained that specific part to the blond before. “What, you want me to propose with it?”

The next second, he lifted his hand and stopped the tip of a blade from coming down. It was the blunt end but it would have hurt a hell lot nonetheless. To be honest, Xanxus was disappointed it was the blunt end. It felt insulting even and it just showed that the kid was still too soft.

“I’m dumping you shithead for good if you *dared* to propose to me with a mafia ring covered in blood,” he hissed darkly.

Xanus only smirked.

The blond teen rolled his eyes then climbed off him.

“Where are you going?” asked Xanxus while Victoire pulled on his boots.

“Home. I have school tomorrow.”

“I still think you’re wasting your time with that hero nonsense,” Xanxus complained loudly while he watched the other person leave. He was met with a growl and sharp red eyes glowering directly at him but Xanxus only rested his head on his hand as his lover’s real name left his lips, “Katsuki.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Just a domestic slice of life cause I want them all to be cute.

I don't think Xanxus and Katsuki are both raging balls of anger all the time so let's enjoy some soft!Xanxus + soft!Katsuki (but they still kind of are assholes). Also added in a pinch of angst cause I can't help myself.

Contains a bit of the light novel spoiler

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Bakugou Katsuki started modeling at a very young age.

At first, Mitsuki occasionally posted his baby pictures on her and Masaru's social media. People loved it. While there were critics, people loved the images of cute babies and the seemingly picture perfect family. It was good for the husband and wife's careers too so Mitsuki started posting more. She knew Katsuki had the face for the cameras. It was near identical to *her* face.

Eventually, a sponsor came knocking and asked for Katsuki to model. Masaru and her agreed. Katsuki did what he was told for that one and more job offers started coming in. But being a kid, he didn't like sitting or standing still for long periods of time and he also didn't like all those people touching him. Thus, Katsuki would quickly lose patience with it as he grew up.

Or so his parents thought.

In order to save for opening up his own hero agency, Katsuki had been picking up modeling gigs here and there. For some reason, he didn't want to use his parents' connections to land jobs but Mitsuki and Masaru didn't interfere. It would be good practice for him. The real world was a cruel place and the world of fashion and modeling was even more competitive than the hero industry. It would show their son that money was earned through hard work and maybe teach him to be better with his money and time.

They never thought too much of it. Katsuki told them he was just

picking up small gigs here and there. He wasn't making any big splashes and it wasn't distracting him from his studies or chores. Hell, the kid was more focused on his hero training than anything else and often came home bruised and tired.

Since their own careers were also going well, that meant they had to leave for business trips often. But Katsuki was mature enough to be able to take care of himself so they just left him money and a note every time they had to fly out.

"Katsuki, we are leaving!" Masaru yelled towards the inside of the house as he hurried out to the car where Mitsuki was waiting.

Mitsuki was scrolling through her phone and there was an article about the young model who was the talk of the European celebrity world lately. Victoire C Quattro. Some people said she looked like a younger version of Mitsuki with the same blond hair and exotic scarlet eyes. Mitsuki and Masaru didn't think they resembled each other that much but other people seemed to think otherwise.

"This copycat rookie is starting to get on my nerves," Mitsuki commented with a frown. "Like who does she think she is? She's super flat and she's only getting so much attention because she is dating some rich Italian guy way older than her."

Masaru said some comforting words to his wife as they drove towards the airport.

Little did they know that their son would jump onto a flight to Italy an hour after they left.

With all the quirks and advancement in technology to help everyone live as comfortably as possible, the time it took to travel between countries has shortened immensely as well. What used to be 15 hours flights were now cut down to 6.

And that was how Katsuki ended up in Varia's headquarters. It was a giant castle that he had gotten familiar with over the years. The place wasn't very welcoming since it was the home to a bunch of hysteric and blood thirsty assassins but Katsuki didn't mind it. It was a nice place. The glass windows were large and the details inside were works of art. Chandeliers and red carpets, gothic stone decorations and polished tiles, the palace was like a fancy five star hotel...just with a lot more dangerously sharp or poisonous objects.

"Bel! Stop sneaking your vegetables into Levi's plate! Luss, if you don't

put down that mirror I'm going to torch your corpse collection!" Katsuki shouted across the messy long dining table while he placed the last dish down heavily. "Also, put down that wine, Xanxus."

He didn't need to turn around to know that his idiot boyfriend was reaching for the alcohol.

"Don't tell me what to do, trash."

Katsuki turned his head slightly to avoid the knife flying his way. It cut into the wall and got stuck there. They were inside the private dining room for the core members of Varia. He had came to check on them since they were finally done with that stupid ring battle business. Of course, they lost according to the script and all of them suffered injuries to different extents. Judging by how much they were bandaged up, there got to be some broken bones and internal bleeding somewhere.

Hence why he made these assholes food. The things he made were easier to digest and for once, he didn't add in the hot spices he loved so much either.

And now apparently he also had to be the one to make them fucking stick to the doctor's instructions for at least a day or two (he was here for a long weekend only). All because these men were too dangerous for regular doctors to deal with. Luss usually did it but he was also badly injured in the fight so Katsuki thought he'd give the guy a break.

Katsuki snatched the wine glass out of Xanxus's hand and placed a bowl of soup in front of the man. Then he ducked before the wine bottle could smash into his face. It shattered against the wall and the red painted the white tiles. Shreds of glass glistened under the light. They stared at each other for a good long minute before Xanxus drained the bowl of soup in a few large gulps.

"You're a goddamn bitch," he said as he set the empty bowl down. "Happy now?"

The blond huffed in triumph as he set the glass in his hand down on the table at the side. The other men in the room snickered but shut up right away when Xanxus's death glare scanned the room.

"Boss, I can go get you another bottle..." Levi started to offer but Katsuki placed a firm hand on his shoulder.

“Levi, shut your trap and sit your ass down or I’m going to explode your face. Am I clear?” Katsuki grinned at him. Not his usual grin when he got first place in sports or academics or the ones he would have on when he threatened Deku to fuck off. No, he smiled like Victoire did on her photoshoots.

Technically he was Victoire right now. Katsuki was wearing a loose red sweater and black leggings. He didn’t bother with makeup but it wasn’t like he really needed it either. He didn’t plan on going out of the castle during his stay here. And Varia was Xanxus’s turf. He had full control here.

“C-Crystal,” the large man with too many piercings croaked.

Levi was weak against girls. This was a stupid weakness for assassin. While it wasn’t that he would be rendered completely *useless* (Levi had no problem murdering female targets), he did often get flustered when he was in too close of proximity with them.

It was fucking weird seeing a man fight while blushing like a school girl.

The rest of lunch went by normally..or what constituted as normal for Varia. Squalo was still as loud as usual and these captains were throwing cusses and threats at each other. Xanxus hadn’t spoken much as he focused on his food. Katsuki ignored most of the chaos and only snapped at them when they tried to use the food he made as weapons of assault.

He fucking took the time and effort to make those. Nobody, and he meant *nobody* can waste his work.

Cleaning up wasn’t any of their problem, there were staff for that. Katsuki stood up and started heading out. Even though they were injured, it wasn’t like the Varia guys were free to lounge around and chat. Besides, it was probably for the better that this group of lunatics don’t all stay in one room together.

Katsuki leaned against the railing of the balcony as he stared at the clear blue sky. It was actually a pretty good day today. The sun wasn’t too hot and there were light breezes every now and then. The garden was as beautiful as he remembered it to be too and they fixed that hole Xanxus blasted.

This place was nice. It was different from his house. While there were still constant shouting and dangerous objects flying his way, it didn’t

feel as suffocating. Here, he didn't have to restrain himself to fit someone else's ideals either.

He was free.

His chest felt lighter as he bathed in the sun. There was a reason why he didn't like being around his parents for too long. To them, apparently there was always something wrong with him all the time and they always demanded more from him. They wanted him to fix things that...well, made him *him*.

Here, no one would give him a second glance for being him.

"You got something for me?" he asked without looking back.

Mammon dropped down beside him and landed on his shoulder. "You have one photoshoot for a lipstick brand at three."

"Since when?" Katsuki asked with an arched eyebrow. Mammon was the one who managed his modeling career.

Their code name was Viper and they were good. *Scary* good. They had a way with money and investment. Katsuki and Mammon, who loved money more than anything else in the world, hit it off before Xanxus got frozen since both of them needed to accumulate wealth. Katsuki needed a way out of his parents' house when he turned eighteen and Mammon found their new money making tree. Modelling paid well when they did it for big brands and people wanted Victoire.

Mammon was also the best illusionist in the world and they played a little trick on Katsuki's parents' brains to make sure they couldn't make the connection between Victoire and their son. This was probably villainous and wrong but Katsuki didn't want to let his parents know what he was doing. It would just give them another leverage against him.

Katsuki didn't hate being Victoire. Sometimes it was even fun. He looked killer in the dresses and heels. It was also kind of fun to be a different person and no one could ever figure it out. In a twisted way, it felt like he was escaping the seemingly never-ending anguish of having to uphold the perfect image of what a hero and the son of the famous Bakugous should look like.

Victoire was lucky.

Make up and perfect smiles, she didn't have to endure cacophony of

insults that was usually hurled his way by the ones who claimed they were only doing this for his sake. She didn't have to act tough all the time (because a hero would never show their weakness) and if she wanted things, there as no one around to make her feel lower than dirt for wanting fun things that didn't aide in his studies or career goals. Or felt that pressured urge of having to earn it by working herself to the bones.

There was no one to tell her to be more like Izuku.

Victoire was free.

He just knew that if his parents knew then they would somehow spin this around and use it to their advantage. If they didn't immediately find it repulsive, they probably would also want a say in defining who Victoire was too. From what "she" wore down to the tiniest detail of mannerism...it was going to be a pain in the ass to deal with. It was bad enough they never seemed satisfied with "Katsuki", letting them know about Victoire would only make it twice as frustrating.

As for Mammon, anything standing in the way between them and money had to be taken care of. One way or another.

"I booked it five minutes ago. Was going to squeeze in another flash red carpet appearance but the hairdresser can't make it." Mammon liked to squeeze in a packed schedule for Katsuki in order to efficiently maximize their profits. But they also had to take into account that Xanxus might not be too happy about his lover being away at work all the time and ignoring him, so Mammon usually left some time for the couple to be alone.

"You are evil." Katsuki didn't want to work as Victoire today. It was one thing to dress like her inside Varia's castle, where none of the men were stupid enough to touch what was Xanxus's. It was another to deal with unsuspecting and gossipy photographers.

"Thank you," Mammon replied while taking out a camera. "Now smile, I need new material to post for your accounts."

Oh yeah, Mammon also managed Victoire's social media because let's face it, Katsuki sucked at PR. Another thing that his parents kept telling him that he needed to work harder to perfect.

"I thought you already took some this morning."

"Parts of Boss were in a few of them. I can't use those so now I don't

have enough to last the week."

Katsuki cocked his head to the side. Right, Mammon had tried to take a picture for one of those just-woke-up-looking-glamorous themes. It was stupid, no one woke up looking like a Hollywood star but apparently people ate this kind of crap up and Mammon had commented that Katsuki had good skin to pull this off. They almost woke up Xanxus during the process. The illusionist flew out of the room as if their posterior was on fire just as Xanxus began to stir. "Don't you ever take a break?"

"Unless I am physically in the grave, nothing is stopping me from making more money." They shrugged without a second thought. "Now smile, cash cow."

Katsuki still smiled for the camera.

Cause hey, he wasn't going to say no to the money either. He needed to get himself set up for the future.

"Remember, be ready by two fifty!" Mammon vanished into thin air after they got a decent amount of satisfying pictures. Since they disappeared so fast, Katsuki could guess what was coming next.

Arms wrapped around the blond from behind and Katsuki could feel the familiar added weight on his body. Xanxus was like a human furnace and while Katsuki never said it out loud, he quite liked how the heat surrounded him. He had to stifle a satisfied purr as he relaxed into the embrace.

"Hey, you're heavy." Katsuki patted him on the arm. The guy towered over six feet and he was close to 200 pounds of pure muscles.

Xanxus made a noise of acknowledgement but didn't move a muscle. His lips brushed by the skin on the back of Katsuki's neck and kisses trailed down the side. Turning around, Katsuki wrapped his arms around the taller guy's neck to better lean in for a kiss. Kissing Xanxus was usually a battle on its own. Xanxus was just as aggressive here as he was on a battlefield.

When they parted, Katsuki was a bit breathless. The blond placed a hand on the dark haired man's broad chest and pushed slightly, signaling for him to take this inside. People could be walking by in the garden beneath them and Katsuki wasn't as shameless as the boss of Varia. He knew what some of them thought of him—they thought Victoire was just a pet or something replaceable, like a flower vase for

aesthetic purposes only (and gods, do they burn through those! Xanxus really needed to stop with his bad habit of throwing stuff at people when he was irritated).

Katsuki didn't care. It was better that way anyways since it made it harder for people to connect the image of an airhead model to an UA hero in training. If any of them were stupid enough to do something to him, he'd let them experience precisely *why* he could got Belphegor and Levi to shut up when he said so.

They went back to Xanxus's office.

It was a very traditional office. There was a large wooden desk and Xanxus's usual "throne" (that is what the Varia people called it). Heavy curtains got pulled to the side to allow the sun to pour in, casting a thin layer of golden dust on the carpet floor. On the other side of the room was a large and comfortable sofa by the fireplace and a well stocked alcohol cabinet that took up almost half a wall. Of course, all of the furniture and decorations were in the same expensive and gothic looking style that matched the rest of the castle.

"What's with so many letters?" Katsuki noticed that there was a pile of unopened letters on the table, all with Vongola's seal.

"The elders are thinking up creative ways to create obstacles for Varia." Xanxus pulled him towards on the sofa and didn't let him touch the letters. "Fucking old foxes."

Oh that.

Katsuki knew that Varia had faced punishment for what they did eight years ago. A lot of their privileges were taken away and Katsuki was pretty sure the old foxes wanted this group to disband. These men were too loyal to Xanxus for their liking. They tried a lot of things, from giving every member an indefinite suspension or putting the castle on surveillance (honestly the spies were no match for Varia) to handing out a few but extremely dangerous and near suicidal missions...they tried every trick in the book. But the Ninth, for whatever reason worked out something with Squalo and this one guy called Ottavio (deceased) they managed to last it out until Xanxus returned.

Well, technically there was more to Ottavio's story but the important thing was that he was dead.

Now Varia's king was back and they wiped the slate clean with

Vongola Nono, it was expected that Varia would rise up again. People wouldn't like that.

Katsuki reached for a pile of paperwork then he stumbled down onto the sofa with Xanxus. While using his boyfriend as a cushion, he yawned.

"They're still trying to pin the other three candidate's deaths on you?" Katsuki asked while he skimmed through the files. Some of these he could do and all Xanxus needed was to sign off on it later. Running a mafia family, or even a department of one, was pretty similar to running an agency. There were bills to pay, manpower to distribute, work to delegate, and a bunch of other stuff. Most of the time Squalo took care of these things but since the guy had enough on his plate, Katsuki didn't mind doing a portion for him. He had been helping out Squalo throughout the years that Xanxus was gone whenever he could so he knew all the in and outs already.

Besides, most of this originally was supposed to be Xanxus's work anyways.

It wasn't that Xanxus couldn't handle paperwork. He just didn't like it and shoved it all onto Squalo. Sometimes Katsuki wondered if Squalo murdered Xanxus's entire family or something in his previous life, cause karma really was treating him like a chew toy in this one. That swordsman's loyalty actually scared Katsuki sometimes.

But then again, he aspired to be a hero and he knew way too much about how the other side of the law operated to be healthy. He was pretty fucked up too.

"I didn't have to do anything," Xanxus grumbled against Katsuki's hair. "Those three idiots fought it out on their own and got what they deserved. That senile old fart thought he had the perfect family and the best of heirs whose brothers would support him through thick and thin, bull shit."

Before the Cradle affair, Xanxus had an overwhelming support within the family. Even Enrico, the blood son who was thought to be the most fitting to ascend to the throne couldn't compare to him.

However, none of that mattered. Vongola Nono was never going to name Xanxus as heir from the start. Not even after all three of his biological sons died.

Sighing, Katsuki turned his head around to kiss the scar on Xanxus's

face. He knew too many secrets. The mafia connection would really be fucking with his hero plans if people found out and this damn boyfriend of his really was a whole package of trouble and drama. But it wasn't like Katsuki was baggage free either so he never complained.

A hand sneaked under his clothing. Rough, heated fingers covered in thick callus caressed the skin along the side of his torso. Katsuki didn't pay it any attention. Xanxus liked touching him. The glycerin in his skin made it smooth and he also didn't scar easily.

"So you got a plan to get rid of that Sawada guy? You can always pin it on the League of Villains." Because Katsuki didn't like those guys who ruined the USJ training for him. They could suffer the wrath of Vongola or whatever mafia styled vengeance was called for all he cared.

Xanxus closed his eyes as he leaned back into the pillows and he pinched Katsuki's waist, delivering a small sting of pain. "Don't get cocky with me, brat. If word gets out that Sawada got taken out by a random gang of street thugs, what does that make me?"

Laughing, Katsuki shoved a pen into Xanxus's hand and told him to sign a few papers. At least Squalo wouldn't have to yell about this unfinished work later.

But that was all he was doing for the day. He was the boyfriend (or was it girlfriend?) and not the secretary. He wasn't actually Varia either so he threw the stack of paper onto the side table and rolled over. Xanxus was resting with an arm pillowed behind his head and there were still bandages over his head.

The blond played with the feathers and fur that decorated the nape of Xanxus's neck.

There was something wrong with him for sure. Katsuki was infatuated with the walking inferno underneath him. He should be using his head but whenever he saw this man that *stupid* thing in his chest sped up and there was this pull. A tug of force that he can't quite name was pulling at him, telling him to stay. He felt like he was being roped in by some kind of power stronger than the force of gravity. And something within him, he had absolutely no idea what it was, was resonating with Xanxus's presence.

They didn't have this kind of relationship before the Cradle affair. No, he was too young then and Xanxus was busy with his mafia school and taking over Varia. But things had changed since Xanxus woke up

from his frozen slumber. He still remembered how two days before the shitshow went down, Xanxus had grabbed him by the ankle and was dangling him in mid air. The dagger was long forgotten on the ground not far from where they were. Xanxus had told him to try and land a hit on him so Katsuki tried. He failed.

Xanxus asked him if he wanted to join him.

Katsuki told him to go to hell. What kind of idiot would recruit a kid to be an assassin? But then again, Belphegor wasn't that much older than Katsuki and he was an actual member.

Xanxus said he was going to take what was rightfully his and when he was back, he would ask again.

The next time they were supposed to meet, Squalo showed up and handed him the feather and fur decoration Xanxus always wore in silence. There was blood on it.

None of them doubted that Xanxus would be back.

They all carried on with their lives. Time hadn't stopped for them.

Katsuki kept training and studying. He didn't just train his quirk. He also did the basic training that Varia officiers did. Another reason why Deku irked him so much while they were growing up was that while he worked for his goal, that shitty nerd never put his money where his mouth was and put in an ounce of actual effort. Katsuki could respect hard work; none of the Varia officers climbed to their positions on luck and talent alone. But that damn green haired creep would only say he wanted to be a hero and kept ranting on and on about how much he wanted to be a hero but wouldn't even run a fucking lap around the school.

But Katsuki didn't have the time or energy to care about stupid Deku acting like gum stuck on the bottom of his shoes.

It was hard to find the energy to actively seek out trouble or threaten someone when he was all spent out because of his hellish training schedule. Over the years, Squalo had tweaked it slightly to better fit Katsuki's progress and age. The blond got *really* good with his needle-like blades because he wasn't about to let Bel gloat about the new moves he could do with his knives and not have something to match him. Katsuki was competitive and it showed.

He also got closer to Mammon through his modeling work. With fewer

missions available, Mammon had to seek out other money making opportunities and Victoire was it.

It was funny, really. After eight long years of being separated, Katsuki reunited with Xanxus as Victoire. He had gotten the call during a photoshoot and he was so anxious that he rushed out of there as soon as the photographer was done with the last shot. He had been in one of those blue ball gowns with floral lace and pearls.

Xanxus had been stunned, whether that was because he was still pumped full of chemicals from the hospital fluids or because he was still googly from being frozen for too long didn't matter. What mattered was that the first thing he said after seeing Katsuki was—

"Hey, damn shark, what the hell happened? The brat I found had a dick."

He completely ruined the moment. Katsuki proceeded to attempt to stab that asshole. Note the attempt. If Levi hadn't been holding him back he was actually going to make Xanxus bleed that day.

Then they got to talking while Xanxus was recovering from being a popsicle for so long and somehow it turned into this strange mess of an intimate connection. It wasn't a love story from those cliche romance dramas and Katsuki knew what they had wasn't "healthy" at all. They screamed at each other, cursed at each other, and sometimes it definitely came down to physical assault, especially if Xanxus was in a mood to spar.

He sighed as he buried his face in Xanxus's chest. The man smelled like rusting iron and gunpowder mixed with whiskey. Very fitting for a mafia.

Katsuki moved his hand, trying to reach for his phone but his fingers brushed by something stuck along the side of the cushions. Pulling it out, he held it in front of his eyes and saw that it was a wrinkled up picture of Vongola Nono and his sons. All of them, biological and adopted.

He wasn't sure how this got there. Judging from the looks of it, it was probably taken a few months before the cradle affair. Enrico, Frederico, and Massimo all stood around Timoteo while Xanxus stood a bit off to the side. He wasn't a people person or very affectionate with his brothers after all.

"Is it callous that I think you're the hottest one in this? The Vongola genes clearly suck." That was an honest opinion. The Vongola

brothers...um, let's just say that none of them were Katsuki's type.

Xanxus laughed and his hand ran down Katsuki's spine. Contrary to his intimidating looks, he had a warm and rich laugh. It was soothing to hear him laugh. While it was different from All Might's signature laughter, Katsuki still found it comforting. Although Xanxus had a short temper and he was an arrogant bastard (Katsuki knew he was the same type of douchebag), Katsuki knew he could rely on him. Maybe even more so than heroes in certain situations.

Xanxus wasn't a man of many words and the time they spent together was usually quiet unless they were having a fight or having sex. Unless Katsuki initiated a conversation first or Xanxus had something important to notify him (not discuss, Katsuki would be lucky if Xanxus had notified him before the man actually ran off and did whatever he pleased), they normally just enjoy the comfortable, peaceful silence together. The peace could last so long as nothing provoked Xanxus, such as an annoying call from the Vongola headquarters or his men being too rowdy and disrupting his rest, both of which will sour his mood.

"UA's sports festival is coming up soon," Katsuki hummed. It wasn't that he expected Xanxus to take an interest in such trivial things. The Varia boss wouldn't concern himself with a quirk competition between young hero students. If he wanted action, there was a long list of missions to pick from since Varia was back on the front line again and doing all the dirty work that encompassed the real ugly side of the mafia.

Katsuki kept talking. This was the place where he could vent about the idiots in his life and no one would tell him that he was being a whiny bitch and should just such it up. But he wasn't expecting a reply. Xanxus don't usually respond with more than a few grunts here and there unless the blond actually pulled something stupid (or interesting). But Xanxus's hand was in his hair and Katsuki liked how that felt.

However, Xanxus did respond at the end of Katsuki's rant today. He lifted Katsuki's chin and sharp red eyes like a beast's focused on him. Imposing and dangerous, he lazily ordered: "You better show those pathetic scumbags what being *Varia quality* means."

His answer?

Katsuki pulled Xanxus closer for another kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Keeping the chaps for this one short cause if I think too deep into it I'll start finding plot holes and my brain will explode from trying to solve them.

Let me know what you guys think :)

Also, a few songs that I think are fitting for this fic:
1. Lucky - Britney Spears
2. Best Of Both World - Hannah Montana
3. 聲 - ウォルピス社 (This one is for the eight years that they spent separated)

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Random Varia member POV (He's an OC I made up)

He's not a good guy (being an assassin and all) and he's got some misogynistic attitudes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Today was Euclide Corrado's first day on the job.

It was intimidatingly nerve wracking to be honest. He was the descendant of a branch of a small famiglia that no one really paid attention to. Euclide didn't have a desire to be boss and since he was born as the third child, the chances of him ever inheriting was slim too. Throughout the years, he made a name for himself in the art of assassination and recently, he caught the eye of a recruiter from Varia.

Varia. He knew of this notorious and unsavory bunch. They were part of Vongola but acted independently, answering to only the Don himself. Violent and efficient, they were said to be the best of the elites even though the group mostly consisted of unruly lunatics.

Euclide had said yes. He was bored of his usual gigs and while freelancing gave him a very flexible schedule, he felt like he was missing something. He worked then blew through his money, wallowing himself in good booze and surrounded himself with escorts. When his account was drained, he would find another city and start on another hit. Repeated.

His life was predictable and boring. Every morning when he got up and stared at the mirror, he saw the same things—a brown haired man almost in his thirties and his eyes were dead. There was no excitement in what he did any longer and he itched for more.

Hey, he was mafia. He was a *villain*. Of course he was messed up in the head.

That was probably why he said yes to the recruiter.

There were many rules within Varia that every member and staff had

to follow. Euclide spent most of his first morning following his supervisor around the base and taking notes. The Varia headquarters was a giant castle so he knew his first order of business would be needing to at least figure out how to navigate and find the bathrooms. It was a standard base, exactly like how he imagined since Varia was a subdivision of the greatest mafia family in the underground society. Long hallways, expensive decorations...and of course, can't forget about the lingering trace scent of metallic blood in the air.

They got to the lounge area where low ranking members usually gathered for a bit of a rest or small chit chat. It looked comfortable enough. There was a big TV, some sofas sparsely spaced around the place, tables and chairs, plus a fridge and microwave. On the far side of the room, there was also a bookshelf and magazine stand.

"This is Boss's bitch." Aristione, his supervisor, was a man about Euclide's age with a hooked nose and thin eyes. He handed over a magazine and tapped the cover. "She's not here often but if she is, she usually hangs around in Boss's office or the commanders' bedroom wing. If it's near supper time then maybe she will show up in the kitchen too. She is authorized to be anywhere in the castle so don't try to kill her."

Looking down, Euclide saw a teenage girl with blond hair and eyes like blood in a flower crown. He thought he had seen her somewhere before, probably on billboards or ads. She was pretty but not really Euclide's type. He liked his ladies bigger and curvier. Also, he didn't pay much attention since he guessed that for a man like Xanxus, these women were replaceable like paper plates. He hadn't had a chance to meet the man yet, a low ranked assassin like him wouldn't have the honor to meet the feared tyrant.

They said Xanxus was a cruel man. Vicious and arrogant, he was a prideful man and he wouldn't take bull shit from anyone. Xanxus was strict too. If they can't meet his standards, they would also be subjected to burn in his flames of wrath. It had only been a few hours but he had been warned at least three times about how their boss had a short fuse.

"Alright, what specifics do I need to know about this girl?" Euclide had acted as bodyguard before. He knew these sugarbaby types and mistresses well enough. They were soft spoken trophy wifes or spoiled brats who only concerned themselves with shopping and gossip. Dealing with them was easy enough since the rules were generally the same: Don't gawk at them, don't talk to them more than necessary,

and accompany them on their afternoon tea parties or shopping trips to act as the mute pack mules.

As long as he didn't sleep with them or let someone put a bullet in their heads, that was good enough. But he really hoped that he wouldn't be stuck on babysitting duty. He was here to find excitement and advancement in his career, not to be stuck watching over some stupid teenage celebrity girl who had more air than actual substance in her head.

Euclide didn't have a personal thing against people like her. But in a place like Varia where only the strong survived, a weakling like a frail model was like weed that was just begging to be pulled out and discarded.

Aristione lifted half a smile at him, almost as if he knew what Euclide was thinking. "Don't touch what is Boss's and if Victoire tells you to do something, so long as it doesn't go against Captain Squalo's or Boss's order, you *do* it. Also, if she smiles at you then you are either already dead or on your way to hell."

That last sentence was a warning. A strange one but a warning nonetheless.

Euclide only nodded. He assumed the other man was warning him that if he tried something stupid, Xanxus was going to have his head. That was normal. Man to man, he could respect that.

The first few months went by quite normally. Euclide went on his missions and he did have some fun. Varia took care of the dirtiest and darkest of work there was out there so the missions they were assigned were dangerous but thrilling. It gave him a sense of pride even, Varia finished things that no one else could have done and they did a splendid job. His colleagues were eccentric and down right psychopaths but at least they haven't tried to murder him too many times yet. Since he was so low ranked, he had only seen a few of the captains higher up the command chain from afar.

When a gloomy Monday morning came around, his supervisor handed him a clipboard with a blank piece of paper and a pen.

Aristione told him to write his will.

All mafia do it. They write a will up early and revise it from time to time. When Euclide first signed the papers for the job offer, he already had to submit one along with the rest of the paperwork.

“Why do I have to write it again?” He just revised it last week and there hadn’t been any drastic events happening. He was just getting used to how Varia worked. They have scheduled training and exams to make sure that everyone’s skills were brushed up and knowledge of all codes and strategy plans were up to date. The operations were also fairly simple that even an idiot could understand.

Everything eventually went to the second-in-command.

Xanxus didn’t like to deal with paperwork so that burden naturally fell on Captain Squalo’s shoulders. The silver haired swordsman was a fair one. Sure, he was awfully *loud* but he was responsible and he handled all work meticulously. It wasn’t to say that Xanxus was incompetent as a leader. Just the contrary in fact, Varia was organized and efficient with near perfect mission accomplishment rates. The man merely minimized his own work by shoving the tedious things onto his subordinates. Most of the missions didn’t need him to be physically present either so he mostly only chimed in when there was something of *actual* importance.

“Cause you’re on shadow duty this week.” Came Aristione’s reply and Euclide immediately felt his chest tightened.

Shadow duty.

Every week there would be this one poor sap who pissed of...something high up above the sky or some officer within their ranks who needed to be the one to tend to Xanxus’s whims. This was the person who had to bring papers and reports to Xanxus, to run errands, and to basically just stay close to Boss and do whatever he told them to do. Normally people within the mafia would be thrilled to have a chance to serve their bosses so closely but in Varia? This was hell. Absolute hell. It was twisted punishment so cruel that everyone would rather go on back to back missions for the whole week straight without sleep instead.

This was the least favourite position that anyone in Varia (except the thunder guardian) absolutely despised. And it was all because of Xanxus’s unpredictable temper. Euclide had heard stories and he had seen people on shadow duty being carried into the medical wing. They got messed up real good.

Xanxus was moody and he had a short temper. To make things worse, he also had a violent nature. Throwing wine glasses or other dangerous objects at people was normal for him and if you happened

to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, you might just get your head smashed into a wall or another hard surface. Oh man, and don't get them started on the shooting! They'd be his shooting targets if he was in a really foul mood.

Overall, that position basically guaranteed a trip to the doctors and maybe one to the morgue if they were unlucky. And Euclide had to last a goddamn *week*.

By now, he had seen most of the core members' faces from afar or even talked to some of them already. The sun guardian, Lussuria, was alright. Euclide wasn't his type so he had no interest in adding the rookie's corpse to his collection. The thunder guardian was Boss's loyal follower who wouldn't allow anyone to bad mouth Xanxus. There was also a teenage prince and an illusionist, both of whom Euclide hadn't needed to talk to yet. He even managed to catch a glimpse of the man with red eyes who stood above them all! He had been too far away to see clearly but he got the feeling that their Boss was a large man with a good muscular build.

Then there was Captain Squalo.

"Take these to Boss and tell him I better see these done by the end of the day!" he shouted as he dumped a stack of papers (that added up to be as thick as three medical textbooks) into Euclide's arms. He had silver hair and left hand was a prosthetic. "Also, if you see Victoire with him tell that brat to fuck off to somewhere else so that shitty Boss would actually do his own work."

Yep. There was no way in the fiery pits of hell that Euclide could ever tell any of those things to Xanxus's or his lover's face. Even without the need to think, he instinctively knew that would be a bad idea. What would happen if that distraction of a girl started complaining and whining? Euclide was sure he'd get the short end of the stick no matter how reasonable he tried to be.

Boss's office was on a different floor than Captain Squalo's. It was awfully quiet around here since Xanxus didn't like noise. The silence seemed to have intensified into a more solid pressure as he got near the large door at the end of the hall. With every step he took, the more the hair on the back of his arms stood up, as if cautioning him about the danger that was closing in.

Euclide knocked on the wooden door while praying to Jesus that he wouldn't be immediately met with flying shot glass. Or worse, getting

shot at through the door. It *had* happened to someone else before.

A deep and rough grunt allowed him to enter.

Stepping inside, Euclide was met with an ordinary office. Large wooden desk, cushioned sofa with a golden rim, fireplace made of bricks...it was the traditional European study that all mafia liked. The only things that held a slightly more personal touch were the alcohol cabinet on the wall and the throne-like chair that Xanxus was currently sitting in.

The king of Varia was a terrifying man even with his eyes closed. Xanxus always wore his uniform loosely or so it seemed. It was all half tucked shirts and loose ties while his dark uniform jacket draped over his shoulders. His imposing aura was thick and heavy, Euclide felt like he was being hunted even though Xanxus hadn't even acknowledged his presence yet.

He also saw Victoire.

She was prettier in person. Victoire wore a white dress that criss crossed at her throat as she sat in Xanxus's lap. The man had a large hand resting on her thigh and her dress was pushed up slightly to reveal milky skin. Instead of the long hair he had seen in the magazines, her hair was shorter than expected. The girl was everything Euclide knew people like her would be. Beautiful and dazzling, with fair skin and enchanting eyes. Although she was a bit on the young side, that wasn't anything special in the mafia world.

She was like an angel.

A weak and frail little song lark that belonged in a fancy cage. She wouldn't last an hour out in the real mafia world.

Euclide quickly averted his gaze away from the model when he saw Xanxus open his eyes. He didn't want to be killed for eyeing the Boss's girl. Red eyes, darker and immensely more beast-like dragged over him as if they were judging his worth. Euclide tried to keep his posture straight as much as he could despite wanting to shiver or race out the door immediately.

"Boss, Captain Squalo asked me to bring you these. He asked that they be done and returned to him before the end of the day." Euclide kept his voice steady and professional. He made sure to not spare any attention towards the model either and convinced himself that she was just another vase or lamp in the room.

It didn't work very well since Victoire asked, "That was all he said?"

There was something strange with her voice. It wasn't as high pitched as a normal school girl's and it sounded kind of raspy too. Euclide kept his eyes straight and his mouth shut. He knew better than to have loose lips. That was usually how people in this business got killed.

"Answer, scum." Xanxus's voice was low rumble and Euclide couldn't read him. Well, judging from the fact that he hadn't been shot at, he would say that Boss was in an ok mood.

But maybe not for very long.

"Permission to relay the full message verbatim, sir?" he asked and hoped that his nervousness wasn't showing too much.

Xanxus gave a curt nod.

"Captain Squalo would like Miss Victoire to fuck off so Boss can work."

As soon as the words left his tongue, Euclide knew he was doomed. The corners of Boss's sagged slightly and Euclided wondered briefly if he would get injured badly enough to be taken off shadow duty all together.

To his surprise, the girl's face lit up.

"Told you so! I'm going to find Bel," she announced with glee as she tried to get away but she barely got a foot on the floor before she got pulled back. Euclide almost choked on his own saliva when he heard Belphegor's name. The prince was insane. Euclide had no idea why anyone would willingly want to go hang out with the Prince of Rippers.

Boss didn't look too happy as he tightened his arm around her waist, basically pinning her in place with one hand.

"Put the paper on the desk and fetch me a bottle of gin on the left," Xanxus commanded without looking at Euclide. Euclide did as he was told and politely placed the alcohol a bit further away from the paperwork. He was aware that Victoire was not enjoying her current position since she was throwing a prissy fit but he was not going to get involved in his Boss's love affairs. Captain Squalo could worry about that.

Euclide just wanted to survive this morning. He couldn't care less about some spoiled little girl.

“Anything else, Boss?” He was done pouring the drink and Victoire had given up on escaping. She leaned into Boss while complaining that he was being self centred and childish. Despite the grumbling of displeasure, she still gave him a peck on the jaw. Boss didn't react to it. The hard lines of his muscles didn't relaxed and his eyes were still as sharp as ever.

As Euclide watched them, it appeared to him that Boss didn't love the girl as much as she liked him. But this was expected. Mafia men, especially those like them whose sole duty was to "clean up" don't usually believed in love. Euclide secretly wondered how long the model will last.

Xanxus spared Euclide a glance while reaching for the stack of papers. “Bring lunch for two at noon. Get a glass of milk too.”

“Yes, sir.”

He was dismissed after that. While he internally thanked the heavens for letting him survive this far without a scratch, he backed out of the office. Before he fully shut the door, he saw something strange. Boss had shoved a few papers into Victoire’s hands, as if he was dividing the work *with her*.

But that would be impossible right?

What could a model possibly know about assassination? Unlike what most people believed, assassination was a work of art and you had to account for a variety of things. Timing and strategy were key. Not to mention depending on the way the assassination had to be carried out, such as with poison or creating “accidents”, they would have to factor in so many variables that was definitely beyond a normal model’s knowledge base.

Maybe Boss just wanted her to be the paperweight. Euclide quickly shook the thoughts out of his head. It wasn’t that he was sexist. He knew there were good hitwomen out there too but come on, that girl was barely sixteen and she was a model. Just a model. Victoire obviously didn’t come from a mafia-related household, although she had a resting bitch face she still looked too bright and sunny to belong on their side.

There was too much hope in her eyes.

Euclide brought lunch as instructed.

He really wanted to flee out of there, basically just away from Boss (any second spent close to the man was another second of possibly being seriously injured), but he wasn't dismissed so he refilled Xanxus's wine glass whenever it was emptied. Yes, he knew that this should be a butler or a maid's job but in reality, no one in their goddamn right minds would let a normal maid or servant serve Xanxus. At least Varia members could dodge or take a hit. If they let some normal person do this, they'd be carried out of the castle in a body bag within the first few days on the job.

Victoire was clingy but she wasn't chatty. Quiet and docile with pretty smiles, Euclide sometimes wondered why nearly all of the more important men he had met in this line of work liked this type. They all just seemed the same to him, like some standard toy that came out of a factory. Boring too.

The milk was for Victoire as expected. The two ate in silence, which only made Euclide more uncomfortable. After he cleared the plates, he was actually slightly confused. So far, Boss hadn't thrown anything at him or insulted him too badly. He was pretty sure everyone except Xanxus himself and Vongola Ninth was "trash" or "scum" in Xanxus's eyes. Even his lover couldn't escape the fate of being called some sort of derogatory term.

Euclide was confused. He expected a hell lot more bodily assaults. To find an answer, he caught Aristione on his way into the kitchen.

"Victoire's been by Boss's side all day so far?" the man asked and when Euclide nodded, he shrugged. "There's your answer. Boss is a little bit better when his girl is around. Careful though, if you fuck up he wouldn't hesitate to murder you. So long as..."

He trailed off and mumbled something incoherent but rushed off when he got radioed in to go assist a mission.

Euclide still had questions. He honestly didn't think Xanxus was the kind of man to be changing how he acted for a woman but he was too afraid to ask anyone else.

The afternoon was uneventful. He carried more paperwork in and out of Xanxus's office then ran a few errands around the castle. When he came back around three, he noticed that Victoire was gone.

Euclide didn't ask where the girl went. Xanxus didn't have a use for

him either so he was dismissed. It was good. He didn't want to stick around to find out how Xanxus normally was when his little model was out of the picture.

And it was just his luck that there would be a security breach during his break.

They were all going to be dead meat. A security breach? Fuck. Euclide was sure Captain Squalo would be feeding them to the sharks if Xanxus didn't order for all of them to be hanged first thing in the morning. Either way, he could already foresee a sad and bleak future of hellfire and extreme training for all of them in the coming month as he raced down the halls.

They were in pursuit of the intruder.

It was a man with a quirk that allowed him to temper with electronics for short periods of time. He had short circuited the surveillance cameras and slipped in. But he didn't get far and was now on the run.

They raced down the long corridor and shots were fired. When they turned around the corner, the intruder leaped over the railing of the stairs and booked it towards the door.

The door where Victoire was currently coming in from. The girl in the white dress was right in the way of a desperate man with a gun. He lunged forward with

"Watch out!" Euclide shouted with a sense of urgency. Having a security breach was bad enough but having the Boss's girl get caught in the crossfire? Oh man, they'd be all burned to charred coal or skinned alive!

But they were too far away and they couldn't shoot with Victoire within such close proximity. Just as Euclide thought she was done for, she vanished. Euclide saw a blurry white shadow kicking off against the pillar on the side and a heel smacked right into the invader's face. The man screamed as he smashed into the floor.

Victoire landed beside him, the edge of her dress flipping through the air as she pulled her foot back. Blood dripped down the tip of her white heel while she stomped on her attacker violently. The pointy end of her heel dug in between the man's ribs and he made a choking sound. He started coughing out blood.

Whoah.

Euclide and two of his colleagues, who joined about the same time as him, stood stunned.

“Drag this piece of trash down to the interrogation cell,” she growled and when she noticed that none of them moved immediately, she crossed her arms in front of her chest and irritation worked its way into her voice. “Well, what the fuck are you extras waiting for? Do I need to go get Xanxus’s guns before someone actually starts acting competent around here?”

The mention of Boss’s name snapped them out of their stupor. They quickly scaled down the stairs and got to work.

Euclide should have known. Xanxus was a merciless killer and the son of the Godfather, there was no way his lady would be normal.

She was no mindless lamb or tamed kitty cat. No, judging by how practiced that kick just now looked, this girl was a spitfire of brute power just like her boyfriend. The way she carried herself had changed too, while still poised, she looked and sounded more alive with all that coarse language and aura that absolutely demanded obedience.

Victoire took off her heels.

“You.” Her eyes landed on Euclide before tossing the heels at him. He almost didn’t catch them because of how shocked he had been. Euclide fumbled with the bloody heels a bit before he stood up straight just as she finished her order, “Clean those.”

“Y-Yes Ma’am!” Euclide answered. For some odd reason, he felt like he was being stared down by Xanxus when Victoire’s red eyes burnt into him. “...Would you like me to go fetch you another pair of shoes? It is not safe to walk barefoot.”

Some idiot might have left a poison needle or two on the ground since that was just normal chaos for Varia.

She looked like she was about to agree but Euclide got the gist that maybe they wouldn’t be needing it because the next second, the loudest and most deafening of yelling cut through the silence.

“VOOOOOIIII!! Where the fuck is that damn intruder?” Captain Squalo came storming down the stairs and he was absolutely livid. Worse, Boss was also behind him. Euclide sneaked a glance towards his colleagues and sure enough, both of them were also almost

shaking in their boots.

Boss grabbed a fistful of Captain Squalo's long hair and slammed the man into the wall. Euclide shuddered at the sound of flesh clashing with the concrete wall.

"THE FUCK WAS THAT FOR, SHITTY BOSS?" The swordsman waved around his sword angrily while gathering himself back up.

"Too loud," Xanxus drawled as he stepped past him. The safety of his gun clicked and before any of them could react, a shot was fired. The scorching bullet embedded itself into the unconscious man on the ground and melted his left foot. He jolted away and wailed in extreme agony. Captain Squalo muttered something about at least now they didn't have to wait for the guy to wake up before they coerced information out of him.
Euclide's colleague almost got his hand caught in it too if he hadn't let go in time.

They all paled slightly when Xanxus's predatory gaze landed on them. It went without saying that all three of them got their serve of beatings too. It hurt. A hell lot. It felt like he was being attacked by the full force of an elephant when Xanxus's fist slammed into him.

"Varia doesn't need trash who can't do their jobs."

Euclide's ears were ringing as he wheezed on the ground. His face stung and he was sure it would bruise real nastily in the morning. Captain Squalo kicked him lightly (Varia's definition of "lightly") to check if he was still conscious before barking at all of them to tell them to get the hell up and carry the intruder off for the interrogation team to take over.

Throughout the whole thing, Victoire hadn't even flinched. Not when melted flesh sprayed along the ground. Not when blood splattered across the tiles. Not when Euclide got beaten, bruised and bloodied.

The only thing she did was extend her arms towards Boss and he picked her up. Her pale feet suspended in midair as she sat in his arms.

"Remember to double their training," she shouted at Captain Squalo while being carried away. "Those idiots can't even take a good shot at this distance! It's disgraceful!"

Evil. Euclide was convinced that model was evil now. He cowered

along with the other two Varia assassins when their swordsman captain lifted a sneer of disappointment at them.

And that was how all three of them ended up in the medical wing. The first thing that Aristione did when he saw them come in was that he *laughed*.

“So I assume you’ve met the darker side of Boss’s bitch,” he snickered when he saw the white heels that Euclide brought along with him. Fuck it, he wasn’t about to just trash those. He had *never* washed women’s shoes before but he had a gut feeling that if he didn’t clean these right, he’d be getting roundhouse kicked in the face. “She’s a little bit savage isn’t she?”

“And *nobody* bothered to tell us?” Euclide complained in disbelief between hisses as he pressed his bruised face against the ice pack.

“Why would we?” He looked at Euclide as if that should have an obvious answer. “It’s more fun to see newbies figure it out themselves.”

Euclide flipped him off.

Aristione threw another roll of bandages at him. He then proceeded to recount a tale where some fool had thought it was a good idea to grope and catcall the Boss’s girl. Victoire didn’t just give him broken bones, she also busted one of his balls on the spot with a single kick. All of the men in the medical wing quaver at the mere imagery that sentence created in their heads. In conclusion, that idiot is no longer alive on this Earth and the Boss’s lady was a psycho bitch who can and *will* murder them if they forgot their place.

She might not be mafia but her demeanor was more villainous than a heck lot of actual mafia.

“So…she’s here to stay for the long term?” someone asked from the group shakily.

“As long as Boss doesn’t change his mind, yeah.” Aristione shrugged. “To be honest I’m betting on a wedding and a successor. Imagine a mini Boss.”

Euclide did the equation inside his head. Xanxus + Victoire = Baby Boss. Groaning, he laid back down on the bed and sincerely wished future him good luck if those two decided to procreate.

He knew he was going to need it.

...Also, this was only the first day for his shadow duty wasn't it?

Fuck.

Chapter End Notes

Next one is Vongola Nono's POV.

This story is going to be loosely connected scenes of chaos and confusion + romance

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

> Warning: Xanxus and Bakugou's language
> Also it is NOT 16 years old Xanxus with 8 years old Katsuki. It's 24 years old defrosted Xanxus with 15 years old Katsuki

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Katsuki had just come back from filming an ad. The long weekend was almost over and he would be leaving Italy tomorrow so Mammon was squeezing him for all he was worth. After taking a shower, he threw on a random white shirt and dried his hair. The shirt was too large for him so it must have been Xanxus's but he didn't feel like rampaging through the closet for his own pajamas.

Yet, he did need a cup of water. Xanxus only kept alcohol in his room.

Pulling open the door, he paused at the sight before him. The core members of Varia were huddled together at the end of the hall and looking suspicious as hell even inside their own bedroom wing. Mammon floated over Bel's head while Levi and Lussuria stood close by.

None of their rooms were next to each other due to a variety of reasons (such as to lower death rate or to prevent stuff from breaking as often). Xanxus's room was also located deepest and furthest down the hall. No one really came anywhere near the lion's den unless absolutely necessary so it was strange seeing others hanging around here.

"What are you doing?" he asked as he got closer. They weren't like the rest of the low ranking Varia members who didn't even notice that Victoire wasn't a girl. They knew his secret.

Bel turned around and greeted him before answering. "The Ninth is visiting."

Katsuki immediately grimaced. This was bad. *Real* bad. He could already imagine his boyfriend smashing wine glasses and throwing chairs. Xanxus would be in a horrible mood after his adoptive father left and the smallest of things would set him off.

“Where’s Squalo?” He hoped that Varia’s second already got some precautions in place. Xanxus’s temper...it wasn’t something to be taken lightly.

“He’s down in the commons. Boss and the Ninth have been in the meeting room for a while now so he’s hanging close by in case things went south.”

Katsuki walked with them towards the common room and sure enough, Squalo was there. He leaned against the wall by the windows with his arms crossed in front of his chest and his sword closed by.

“How’s Boss doing?” Levi sat down on the armchair with a worried look pasted on his face. His eyes kept going over to the farside of the room. Katsuki knew that there was a meeting room on the other side. It was one used to host guests with more intimate ties with Vongola.

Squalo shrugged. “I heard things being smashed in there just now.”

"Boss is going to be fuming for the rest of the week,” Mammon grumbled under their breath. Katsuki was pretty sure they were already planning on taking on a few foreign missions to stay away from Xanxus for the time being.

Lussuria shook his head. “And drinking. I’ll tell the supply guys to go on another alcohol run. Katsuki, how much vodka is left in Boss’s cabinet? Maybe we should refill his tequila stock too while we’re at it.”

“Don’t bother.” Squalo stopped them with a wave of his hand. “Wait until the meeting’s done. Shitty boss might just blow the castle up if he’s pissed enough and it’d be a waste of effort to restock what he's going to smash anyways. Ah, damn it. It’s such a pain in the ass to fill out the paperwork for reconstruction...”

The silver haired man trailed off and he suddenly got uncharacteristically quiet as his gaze locked with Katsuki’s. Placing a hand on his chin, his metallic grey eyes scanned Katsuki from head to toe as if he was contemplating something.

All eyes soon landed on the blond teen as well.

"What?" Katsuki barked as the hair on the back of his neck stood up. He had a bad feeling about this.

"Ushishishi, your turn Princess. Go take one for the team," Belphegor

announced as he swung an arm around Katsuki's shoulders.

Katsuki understood instantly. They wanted him to go in there. As Victoire!

"What the hell? No. No way." Katsuki stepped sideways to avoid the prince's hand. In a low voice, he hissed, "Vongola Nono is in there! What the hell am I even supposed to do after I go in there?"

"Be the stupidest of stupid blondes? Be perky and girly with sugar and spice and everything nice? Maybe you'd surprise the Ninth enough that he would have a heart attack." Levi suggested with a scratch of his head.

Katsuki stomped on the man's foot. "You are not helping."

"You just need to be a distraction so that they stop...well, *that*." Squalo gestured towards the other side of the wall where sounds of glass shattering and heavy objects hitting the floor vibrated through the walls. "At this rate Boss is going to start blasting holes in the walls, especially when that bastard Iemitsu is also here to make things worse."

"What happens if the Ninth starts asking me personal questions?"

"You answer like you're in one of your interviews."

"You're telling me to lie to the Capo Dei Capi?"

They all shared a glance with each other before collectively replying with different variations of yes.

Unbelievable. Bunch of bastards.

"Xanxus is going to kick all of our asses afterwards." Katsuki didn't think his boyfriend was going to be too happy with them meddling. And an unhappy Xanxus meant their lives would all be immensely more difficult. There was also a chance that *his* ass was going to be sore as hell.

"We're willing to take a gamble. It's better than having to rebuild the base again. Construction takes weeks and even months." Squalo pushed him towards Lussuria, then he dropped himself down into the nearest chair. "Dress him up, Luss."

Lussuria clapped his hands as if calling for a puppy to follow. "Come

on, Katsuki. You can pick the dress."

Katsuki would have gone kicking and screaming but he didn't want to cause a commotion and draw attention. Before he got pulled out of the room, he gave all of them a middle finger and spat venomously, "If Xanxus shoots at me for this, I am using you all as meat shields."

Bel only gave him a wide grin. "He won't shoot at you if he's too busy fucking you."

He then ducked out of the way as daggers flew past his head, nicking off a strand of his hair. Katsuki made a face at him while he laughed and he also glared at the rest of Varia's officers.

He hated all of them.

And he was totally going to find a way to get back at them for this.

Timoteo started his day with a cup of extra strong coffee. Hand brewed the traditional Italian way.

Usually he doesn't go with something so strong. The inevitable disease called old age certainly took a toll on his body. While he was still considered to be in above average health for his advanced years, he certainly wasn't what he used to be. The decline from his prime was expected and he had come to accept it well.

Now if only the other things could be as easy to embrace.

Timoteo was not a man without sins.

He had dedicated his whole life to protecting his family and for a family as large as Vongola, whose influence spread far and wide even in this age of quirks and heroes, their history was drenched in blood. Bones paved their way to glory and the death of countless comrades and enemies haunt every inch of their walls.

Times may have changed but Vongola still had Sicily and a good portion of Italy under its clenches. Because of the heavy mafia presences, they had already established order amongst the families and it was a very delicate balance. Consequently, there were very few heroes in Italy and the ones who were licenced generally belonged to a family or had been bought with bribes to keep up a front.

There were many things Timoteo wished could have gone differently but none brought him greater sorrow than the hard decisions he had to make regarding his sons. He knew from the moment he agreed to meet the woman from the slums that he would come to regret it one day but he still went anyway.

It was a cold and bleak day that he met the woman who claimed her child was his son. She had been dressed in an old brown cloak and her dress looked worn. Admittedly, she might have been beautiful once but life had worn her down and there was this unshakable tired look in the wrinkles of her skin. Her dark hair looked dried and dull while her hands were covered in callus from years of hard labor. She was poor and desperate.

So was her son.

He had been calm. A little boy with dark hair and red eyes dressed in thin clothing that clearly didn't fit him well. The sleeves were too short. The pants had a patch of mismatched colored fabric. His eyes were sharp and Timoteo knew that look all too well. It was the look of someone who was constantly in survival mode. Someone who lived side by side with danger and had to fight with all they've got just to keep breathing for another day.

He had tried to hide it but Timoteo could see a glint of hope behind those red irises.

The woman said she named her child Xanxus because he was the one who shall succeed Timoteo and exceed him.

Of course, she was delusional. Timoteo would not have betrayed his late wife and conceived a child out of wedlock. But she had sounded so hopeful and it was obvious that she was too far gone. This woman truly believed in her words and thought she had an affair with him.

"The fire," she had said with a smile and wide eyes that didn't look sane. "He has the fire."

Timoteo felt a surge of anger at her words. Flames and quirks were different things. While some have tried to categorize flames as a subcategory of quirks, those in the mafia knew very well that there was a distinctive difference between the two. Flames were an extension of a person's resolve and life force, it wasn't something as simple as having a tail. A few older scientists within their organizations have observed that stronger the flames, the weaker quirk someone may have. It wasn't to say that these two abilities were exclusively unable to coexist within a person

but it would seem that the two must be balanced out.

This wasn't the first time someone had claimed to be of the Vongola blood.

Many had tried to pass off a flame or fire related quirk as Vongola's flames but the thing was, a quirk was just a quirk. It lacked the harmony and soul that belonged to the mafia's flames. Timoteo didn't expect to see the dying will flame actually lit up on the boy's palm.

He saw the embers swaying on the child's thin hands and no, it was not the signature sky flame like his own or his mother's. It was a different kind of flame. It was the destructive and dangerous fire that the second Vongola wielded as he installed terror into all of their enemies' hearts.

It was the Flame of Wrath.

The same brutal power that had wiped enemy bases clean off the earth's surface and even made Vongola Secondo's allies cowered in fear.

Timoteo was a compassionate man. He was loved and respected by his allies and enemies. He was a just and honorable man who chose to rule with wisdom and not fear. But that didn't mean he couldn't make the tough calls or the cruel choices. He wouldn't have lived as long as he had if he couldn't do those things.

And on that chilly day in the streets of the slums, he made the cruelest decision he had ever made in a long time.

He bent down and wrapped his scarf around the boy's neck.

"There is no mistake that you are my son."

Lies. Timoteo knew he would regret his words one day.

In the next few years, Xanxus grew. Timoteo didn't deny him anything. The finest education, the best foods, the most comfortable beds…he gave that child the best Vongola had to offer. Just like Timoteo had provided for his three biological sons. He knew not all of them would become Vongola Decimo since there was only one throne but they were Vongola's heirs, and danger accompanied their every move so he trained them to be prepared.

Deep down, he knew he should have said something about Xanxus's true heritage to the boy. But the truth was stuck on his tongue. Everytime he tried to come clean, the words get jumbled and lost. Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months…the secret became something he had

hoped to take to his graves.

Xanxus was everything a Don could have asked for in an heir. He was intelligent and strong, a gifted boy with a strong fire and determination. Xanxus was a natural leader with charisma, someone who could make armies of men bow before his feet. This child excelled and exceeded his brothers in all aspects.

But Timoteo knew Xanxus could never be crowned heir.

He might have everything it took to be boss but the blood in his veins would eventually betray him. He was not Vongola in blood and blood was the key to inheritance of this empire of crime.

Timoteo knew that truth would destroy his son. Xanxus had believed and prided himself as Timoteo's son. He was determined to prove that he was better than all of his brothers and become the next boss.

Timoteo could only watch as his son sunk deeper into the lies that he had helped weave. It was cowardly of him but he couldn't bear the thought of seeing his child drift from him. He couldn't bear to see nothing but betrayal and hurt in those red eyes.

Then the inevitable came. Xanxus found Timoteo's journal and learned the truth. He crumbled as the bloody truth sliced his heart and everything he had ever believed in apart. Timoteo had fought Xanxus. He was a father but he was also a boss.

And the famiglia had to come first. There were too many people's livelihoods depending on Vongola, too many families and innocents would be dragged into chaos and bloodshed if the peace was disturbed.

Xanxus had strength and skills. He managed to break through Vongola's defenses with the finest of Varia's men. Timoteo had been proud of Xanxus before the attack. There were low murmurs of disapproval and suspicion from their ranks when Timoteo first appointed Xanxus as the next head of Varia. It should have been that silver haired boy with a sword who killed the previous head but the boy, Superbi Squalo, had knelt before Xanxus, pledging his loyalty to him.

Timoteo wanted to find a place for his son in the family and with a few pushes from those who wished to see Xanxus dead, he was sent off to oversee the mess of a psychotic and unruly group of assassins. Iemitsu had warned him it was a bad idea to leave Varia in Xanxus's hands. Timoteo hadn't wanted to believe him then.

As always, Xanxus was born to lead and quickly made all of Varia his. His to command and his to use in a coup against Timoteo.

Eight years was a long time but their fight was still fresh in Timoteo's mind. They have lost good men in that internal war and as the head of the family, he must mark an end to it all. Even if that meant raising his weapon against a child he truly saw as his own.

He had locked Xanxus in ice and imprisoned him in metal and chains, sealing him in the dark basement in a secluded place that only he and a few of his guardians knew the location of. It was too dangerous to let Xanxus out and Timoteo did not want to execute his son.

Eight years was a long time.

Long enough that Frederico, his third son, was reduced to a pile of bones before anyone even realized he was gone for good. Frederico had always been the most spoiled one. He was the baby of the three brothers so they had all indulged him. Frederico had his mother's smile. He was a social butterfly and enjoyed basking in the attention. Alcohol and models, he was the life of the party everywhere he went.

The next one to go was Massimo. Massimo was the most gentle of the three brothers. He did not enjoy physical activities and was more than willing to sit at a desk with the paperwork. They found him bloated at the bottom of a river. Timoteo had not shed a single tear when they lowered his second son into the ground. Funerals were too common in their world and tears, while sometimes they were a weapon, most of the time they were only a sign of weakness.

Vongola couldn't show weakness.

Enrico had been Timoteo's eldest. The heir. The *proper and rightful* heir. He had taken after Timoteo and he was a charmer. Although still young, he had the sharpest intuition amongst his brothers and was wise beyond his years. He was talented too, not only was he an astounding marksman but he also had a heart of gold that made people gravitate towards him, a true sky. He could have been a wonderful leader.

But then his blood spilled on the streets of Sicily.

Eight years was too long of a time.

Timoteo still remembered how Xanxus's face had twisted with disbelief and resentment as the frost and ice blanketed his flesh.

His youngest was looking better than when he first exited the ice. There was a permanent scar on the left side of his face, a patch of ragged skin that was a shade darker than the rest of him. Timoteo knew there was more on Xanxu's body. More scars that symbolized a failure and defeat. Marks that were like the tears and cracks in their relationship that Timoteo didn't know how to fix or even dared to think if they could be amended one day.

Vongola Nono had been forgiving. The sins of Varia had been atoned and Vongola shall spare the traitors' lives. Varia was still Xanxus's. Independent and his. Only his.

Timoteo didn't think there would be another man more fitting to lead Varia anyways.

But today, he was here as himself. Just a father who wished to speak with his son because despite everything that had happened, he still saw Xanxus as his real child.

"Xanxus," he said. Iemitsu was standing behind him. The blond man stood stoic as Timoteo sat across from Xanxus. They were in one of Varia's meeting rooms and the decorations were pretty similar to what Vonogla's headquarter had. It was the same European structures and fancy decorations, but the placements had a less domestic air to it. The place was beautiful like it had come out of a painting but at the same time cold and unwelcoming.

"Old Man," Xanxus grunted in a raspy voice. He was sprawled out on the couch across from Timoteo like a king on his throne. "Whatever it is that you want, just get it out already. You're wasting both of our time here."

He was always filled with anger and hatred these days. Timoteo knew this was his fault. He deserved it all. The rampage had dwindled slightly, but just barely. Guilt and self hatred consumed Timoteo's heart as he watched the crease between Xanxus's eyebrows deepened. He was scowling and there was no warmth in his eyes. Only fury.

Xanxus still looked like he did eight years ago. Sixteen. He was big for his age and his wrath even grander. Eight years ago he had let his explosive wrath consumed him, just as Timoteo had feared. Now, the anger was still there, like an undercurrent that swirled underneath his every word and action while spite and hatred fueled his heart.

Timoteo knew he deserved all of it.

He had used his child. Baited him with the false hope of one last chance at

the throne when he knew Xanxus's blood would be rejected by the Vongola ring.

"I'm sorry…" Timoteo had started. He was here as a father today. A father who had lied to and betrayed his child. He apologized for not telling the truth sooner and told Xanxus about how much he still loved him. He forgave him. Even with the plots to overthrow the family and the attempts on his life, Timoteo knew this was all his fault. He was the coward who couldn't bring himself to tell the truth sooner. If only he had said something earlier than maybe none of this would have to happen.

A glass shattered at his feet. The yellowish brown liquid sprayed along the carpet as sharp little shreds of crystal skipped across the floor. Iemitsu moved but Timoteo stopped him.

"I don't need your pitiful apologies!" Xanxus snarled at him and he stood up. Scars expanded over his exposed skin as rage filled every cell in his body. He was a dark storm ready to unleash terror amongst everything that dared to stand in his path.

The cub had grown and a pride couldn't have two alphas. Timoteo's guardians had warned him so. There were also people in the family who feared Xanxus. Too powerful, too influential, too brutal...but there was a shadow of the boy from the slums lingering even after years of enjoying the finest of wealth Vongola had to offer. Hurt and scared and the only way he knew how to deal with it all was by fighting and violence.

Timoteo sat still as Xanxus kicked the table over. The vodka bottle shattered on the ground and the thick wood of the table gave out under the young man's foot. It creaked in agony before finally snapping, sending small splinters of wood flying.

Timoteo moved his head back as Iemitsu caught a book flying dangerously at his head. The CEDEF leader shouted stern words at Xanxus but all of their voices were just turning into an unbearable and wretched noise inside Timoteo's head.

He was too old for this.

Despite what had happened, Xanxus was *still* his son. The last one who was still alive. Timoteo didn't want another war with his child. But no matter what he said, his words fell on deaf ears. No words were enough to make up for what he did either. He could say "I love you, son" or "I didn't mean for this to happen" a thousand times and it wouldn't change a thing.

All Xanxus did was scream at him to shut up and more things clattered to the ground.

There was a knock on the door but whoever it was didn't wait for them to respond. The door swung open and Timoteo could feel Iemitsu, who was facing the door, stiffened in surprise. Lifting his eyes slightly, the old boss of Vongola also let out a small quiet gasp.

There was a woman...no, a girl, by the door.

Varia had female staff and officers but the one who came in was *different*. She had blond hair that flowed down to her waist and it was slightly spiky at the top. Her eyes were like rubies, a brighter shade of scarlet than the furious red Timoteo was used to seeing in his son's harsh eyes. She was wearing a blue and white dress that was shorter at the front and longer in the back, everything was tied together with a blue ribbon at the waist. A pearl lace patterned choker decorated her neck and it sat beautifully on her porcelain skin. Delicate features and a slim but streamlined frame, she came in with a silver platter carrying a floral tea set.

She didn't belong. Not here. Not in a castle filled with lunatics and sins. Timoteo might be old but he was no fool. That hyper intuition that ran in all of Vongola's blood served him well even now. It told him that she was not as frail as she appeared to be.

There was a sharpness behind her eyes and Timoteo knew all too well that beauty could be deadly. People might think of her as an angel but she was more like a rose with fresh dew.

And a rose was never without thorns.

It was strange. There was something off that Timoteo couldn't quite place his finger on but his mind was also too preoccupied by the fact that there was a *teenage girl* in Varia's headquarters.

A maid? No. The servants would know better than to come anywhere near Xanxus when he was on one of his rampages. And she didn't have fear in her eyes, not even when she saw the horrible state the room was in.

But if not a servant, then that would suggest she was Varia too. Timoteo knew his son. Xanxus wouldn't have kept someone *useless* around. However, that didn't make sense either. The Varia members he had seen always wore their uniform or some kind of dark suit. None of them would dress as dazzling.

“What are you doing here, trash?” Xanxus’s voice was low and it signalled danger. Timoteo eyed Iemitsu and he saw the man got a bit nervous too. They all knew that Xanxus had no care for someone’s gender or anything along those labels. Women, kids, elderly, all of them would get burned if they got on his nerves.

She blinked but her smile didn’t waver. “Squalo asked that I bring refreshments for the guests.”

Squalo. She was calling Varia’s second, the Sword Emperor, by name with no title.

“Am I intruding on something important? Should I leave?” she asked with a graceful tilt of her head. And Timoteo watched in astonishment as she placed a hand on Xanxus’s arm.

Without him blowing her to bits or smacking her straight in the face.

“Oh no, stay. It’s alright,” Timoteo smiled at her gently. He would have to admit, his curiosity had been piqued. She smiled back at him and offered Timoteo and Iemitsu the tea before placing the platter on the side coffee table. "Who is your...friend here, Xanxus?”

"It's none of your business," Xanxus snapped back at him, almost too quickly. Flopping back down on the couch, he sat there brooding with the embers of anger still cracking dangerously within him.

Timoteo believed he might be able to stay a little bit longer.

"Young lady, what’s your name?” he asked her when she sat down next to Xanxus.

Xanxus wasn’t looking at her and he seemed to be ignoring her presence all together. Her hand found his son’s and she held on despite that sizzling glow of heat shimmering underneath those rough skin.

His son scowled but didn’t push her away. Timoteo was sure Iemitsu’s jaw was on the ground right now and his would be too if he wasn’t too busy looking for signs of...well, something. Maybe some kind of sign of coercion or grudge. Some sort of ulterior motive underneath all that sweet appearance.

“It’s Victoire.”

Timoteo learned a bit more about her in the next few minutes. She was a model. She was Japanese. She was only fifteen.

Fifteen.

Too young.

But Xanxus's time was stopped eight years ago. He had been a mere teenager then. Sixteen and angry when he felt his world shattered around him and realized he was surrounded by lies.

Maybe his taste in partners was still stuck on what he preferred when he was sixteen. They all knew the type. A highschool sweetheart where the love was purer and much simpler.

Secretly, Timoteo doubted that. Xanxus had never been one for romance when he was still in school. That had always been more of his brothers' (Frederico always had a lady friend on his arms and many surrounded Enrico, contending to be his wife) thing. It would be a miracle if he didn't immediately call the daughter of another family some kind of insulting term and scared them off.

Timoteo was sure Xanxus didn't fall for a pretty face alone. With their status, they have already seen countless stunning beauties. There was something conflicting about the girl in front of him. She was more than what she appeared to be.

"...Are you happy here?" Iemitsu finally asked, although it sounded more like he was choking. His eyes met Xanxus's gaze and neither looked friendly. "With *Xanxus*?"

"Why, of course!" She beamed so bright that it felt like she was outshining the sun. "I enjoy being here!"

Iemitsu's lips twitched oddly as if he didn't know how to respond.

"You're not scared?"

"What is there to be scared of?"

Both Iemitsu and Timoteo fell into silence. What was there to be scared of? They could give a whole dictionary thick of things to be scared of. For starters, the weapon wielding maniacs roaming these halls and Xanxus's temper were two very urgent issues.

But they couldn't say anything when they saw the absolute pure mirth on the girl's face as she leaned closer into Xanxus. She was in love.

With Xanxus.

She looked at him with such adoration and love that it made their stomachs churned with the feeling that maybe the world was about to explode right now, because none of this made sense.

Timoteo didn't expect that he would ever live to see this day come to life. His son, his youngest and proudest son dabbling in romance? Maybe he woke up on the wrong side of the world today. He couldn't believe his eyes.

There was also an almost permanent tingle of the feeling that something was very very wrong clinging onto the back of his spine. It was making him feel like he was sitting on a cushion made of needles. That smile on the blond girl's face was so cheerful and unsuspecting, so sincere that it just felt unsettling.

His instincts predicted danger.

She was either even more oblivious than Iemitsu's wife or there was something very wrong with her head. Timoteo didn't want to use the words along the lines of intellectually challenged, maybe a lack of self-preservation at best.

"Are you done gawking?" Xanxus growled at them and his glare had only gotten scarier with age. The scars on him had mostly receded."Get the fuck out if you don't have anything of actual importance to discuss."

"It was nice meeting you, Victoire." Timoteo got up. "Thank you for putting up with my son...he could be a little difficult sometimes. I will be taking my leave now."

She just kept smiling at him. All sweet and innocent while standing next to the walking machine of massacre known as Xanxus.

Timoteo would not admit that maybe, just maybe, he sort of ran away because he didn't know what else to do. He expected Xanxus to be mad, to throw things, and to yell at him with words like daggers. He did not expect to meet his son's little girlfriend, who didn't look one bit like she was connected to the mafia at all.

The next day, he received a secret report that contained information on Victoire. It showed that she was the face of many endorsements and a beloved model for many magazines but nothing more. She had a flourishing career that was for sure.

"It seemed like Mammon is the one managing her work," Iemitsu coughed. He had asked Timoteo to hit him with his cane right after they left Varia yesterday just to check that he wasn't dreaming. "They wiped everything

else about her clean."

Mammon was the greatest illusionist in the world and they have lived a very long lifetime. It would be easy for them to do such a thing.

"Or maybe she doesn't exist at all." Victoire was probably only a stage name. They would have known about her existence sooner but with the ring battle and the other things that they had to deal with, the detail about Xanxus having a lover was easily glossed over and forgotten. "I didn't think there would be a day that we'd see Xanxus with a girl."

"Me either," Iemitsu muttered darkly under his breath. "Still think she's crazy. Or maybe Xanxus is finally losing it completely. Should we dig deeper?"

There was concern in Iemitsu's voice. Of course there was. She was a civilian from a non-mafia background (no one who grew up on their side of the law could smile with so much hope) dating Xanxus! And they were mafia. They had to be naturally suspicious of people who got close to them since they never knew when a friendly face would turn on them and tried to stick a knife in their backs.

But Timoteo only shook his head.

Timoteo knew love and he knew his son. Someone had seen through Xanxus even with all his bruteness and flaws. She had accepted his fury and held the pieces of his heart (the heart that Timoteo had a hand in helping shattered) in her palms, trying to collect together what most would consider too broken to be repaired.

And Xanxus was responding to her. Not in words but in the way he acted.

There was a second part to Iemitsu's report. Victoire had left Varia's headquarters this morning. She walked out on her own two feet without any broken bones too. Timoteo smiled a bit at the picture in his hands. It was blurry and grainy but it showed his son leaning down ever so slightly for his lover to leave a parting kiss on his cheek.

Young love was reckless and hopeful. Too naive for their own good.

But it was love nonetheless.

Placing the photo down, Timoteo signed as he looked out the window with his hands behind his back.

"Iemitsu."

“Yes, sir?”

“Would it be too soon to start wishing for a grandchild?”

Iemitsu choked on air for a bit before straining, “Sir, she is fifteen. I sincerely hope Xanxus does not knock her up at this age.”

“Too soon then?” Timoteo sighed. Well, he still had some good years left in him so maybe this was one thing to look forward to.

Maybe one day he wouldn’t be sitting alone at the long table for dinners again.

Xanxus didn’t wake up with a jolt or returned to the world of the living from his long slumber as simply as if a spell had been broken.

The first few weeks (or maybe it was months) were spent in and out of consciousness. He was trapped in his own body but mostly too unaware to even realize that. Sometimes he could feel pain, a chilling numbness that seeped through his bones but it wasn’t enough to wake him completely. There was beeping and low whispers. It sounded like his father (not father, never was his father) most of the time, disappointed and exhausted, just like how the old man sounded when he froze him.

He was cold. Still so very cold as if he was still encased in ice even as he laid in a bed covered with soft white sheets. His muscles refused to cooperate at first, too stiff from resting for so long and he had to force himself beyond his limits just to sit up. It felt like he was killing himself over and over as he walked. The pain was still there. So were the new scars that marked his skin.

The nurses and doctors were scared of him. They came in expressionless with quivering pale blue lips and left with fear in their eyes. The servants too. New faces come and go because he would throw the culinary or whatever was closed by at them. Glass and porcelain shattered, creating an angry symphony of madness Xanxus knew all too well from his childhood. Sometimes he would see blood too and the screaming would be cut short by hurried footsteps that carried the wounded out of his sight.

Xanxus couldn’t care less about what they thought of him.

Guards watched his door and the whispers lingered in the air.

“Why was he still alive?”

“Too dangerous. Should have put him down.”

”Repaid Ninth’s generosity with stupidity.”

They knew that he wasn’t the real scion, that he wasn’t the blood son. He was just a charity ward who didn’t know his place.

He was used to the whispered harsh words and pity. Being known as Vongola Ninth’s bastard son, a less than prestigious title, had its toll. No one would have accepted a street rat into their ranks if he didn’t work for it. And being the bastard son meant he was proof of the Boss’s infidelity to a woman whom the whole family adored and respected. A proof of betrayal in the eyes of the three biological heirs. It wasn’t to say the Vongola brothers didn’t attempt to be nice to him but that kindness always came with a sort of estrangement. Pity. They pitied him.

So no, he was no stranger to the rumors and judgement that circulated around behind his back. What he didn’t like was the constant reminder that his father, or the man he had thought was his father, lied to him for years.

And then the letters came. Fine black ink on paper that smelled like flowers and tinted gold. They all came sealed in a snow white envelope with that fucking red seal Xanxus found to be an eyesore. They said the same things every time. Son. Sorry. Forgiveness. Father. Family.

Fucking bull shit. They were never family.

Squalo showed up one morning. His hair had gotten a lot longer because of that stupid vow of his back when they were younger (it felt like only months had passed for Xanxus, not eight damn years). He had come with Levi, who might be an idiot but he was a loyal idiot. Xanxus had kicked the man for trying to hug him.

The guards were gone. Xanxus knew they could leave whenever they wanted now but it would never be this easy. The old man wanted something. He wanted something from him. There was no indication for it but Xanxus just knew because that old man was a fucking fox.

He didn’t question why he was defrosted now of all times.

Then he heard footsteps clicking on wood and he saw something he couldn’t forget. Eight years and the loud little kid with too much explosion in his system Xanxus found during a random stroll down the streets of Milan was all grown up. There was still baby fat on the blond’s cheeks and moisture glistened in those ruby eyes. Little droplets of liquid shimmered on

his long lashes and he was dazzling. The heavy hem of the dress dragged behind him as he stood barefoot at the doorway. It was sparkly, as if he was wearing the starry sky in all of its glorious beauty.

For some odd reason, Xanxus was reminded of the tales of old. Like the princesses that his mother used to tell him about on her better days. The one who was waiting for a stupid prince to come find them with the glass slipper instead of finding a backbone and fighting for what was rightfully hers.

The only difference was that the "princess" before him was real. And out for blood.

Katsuki had gotten better with his weapons.

Beautiful. Real. Lively and loud as ever.

The blond returned the fur and feather hair decoration to Xanxus. It had been taken care of well, the fur still shined and the beads polished as if they were new.

"Welcome back shithead," he had told him.

By the time that Xanxus was fully back on his feet, he had caught up with what he missed out during these eight years. Katsuki was still in that shitty household. He had a model career with Mammon's help.

He still wanted to be a hero.

Xanxus vaguely remembered thinking that Katsuki was still a stupid brat. A stupid brat with too much hope and too much faith. It was irritating.

He didn't say anything as he tossed the kid into the lake. When Katsuki climbed out like a wet dog, the kid tried to kill him.

They had been by the fireplace that evening. Katsuki scattered pillows out on the ground and laid there like a child (he was a child). An opened box of chocolate was placed within his reach along with a cup of milk. Sweets were something hard to come by for him under his parent's house. They had a strict rule for diets. Xanxus thought it was crap, just another method of control. The amount of work outs this kid did was more than enough to accommodate a few chocolates.

Katsuki rolled around on the pile of soft blankets and pillows when he got tired of reading those thick Italian books. The blond had gotten good at the language and Xanxus didn't have to switch over to Japanese like he used to

anymore.

Xanxus had watched him from the couch. He hid a smirk behind the rim of his alcohol glass when the blond complained about how learning languages was a bitch. They threw insults at each other but there was a teasing tone and an underlying layer of fondness disguised in the condescending words. In a moment of tipsy inattention, the boy was in his lap and Xanxus tasted the sweetness of the chocolate along with the spice of tequila on his tongue. Kisses led to touches and he woke up with a warm body curled up against him.

What they did was probably illegal and wrong but he was mafia and he didn't care.

Sometimes he still felt cold. The scars ached as if there was frost covering them and most of the time he just gritted through it. Sleeping it off in the shadowy corners of the room where no light could reach him after he chased all of his subordinates out. Then there were the times where he would reach out, grabbing a fistful of blond hair and distracted himself with a tight heat.

Xanxus didn't believe in love. That kind of crap never lasted. He remembered a cramped living room with creaky floorboards and mold on the walls. The halls outside smelled like piss. A man was screaming, drunken slurs left his lopsided lips as bottles of cheap wine smashed against the walls. On rare occasions, his mother screams back louder and harder but usually she just wept. Then the man would leave and never come back. They always leave.

They always leave.

His mother did too. No matter how much she used to tell him she loved him on her good days, her lovely face turned twisted and madness painted her lips on her bad ones. She had left him too. Took a large sum of money and never looked back. He didn't think she would last long out there alone, not even with the wealth but he knew they wouldn't be meeting again.

Maybe she did love him. Her lies and delusions sent him out of the crappy gutters and gave him a life out of the slums of poverty.

Xanxus didn't think what he and Katsuki had was love. It can't be love. Love never lasted. But it was probably the closest thing either of them could ever muster in their lives.

Stupid brat's mother was a stuck up bitch and his dad a spineless doormat. Xanxus's own mother was a delusional whore and his father, biological

and adoptive both betrayed him. One lied about his true heritage, allowing him to believe in the misconception that he could become the successor, and the other was never present in his life to begin with.

They both chased after perfection, for an absolute and undisputable victory in everything they did. They had to prove their own worth to family because that was the only way to earn acceptance. Practically raised themselves. However, nothing they did would ever be enough. Imperfect. A tainted stain. A disgrace. They were angry at this stinking world and that fire burned them from the inside out.

In short, they both got a truckload of issues.

He drank and cussed. Katsuki worked himself over his limits and cursed. Both of them had a vulgar vocabulary that they weren't afraid to throw around. They were too similar. They saw the pain and mistrust behind each other's eyes too well. Xanxus had his old scars and Katsuki with his blue and black bruises...sometimes Katsuki needed a chest to cry on and sometimes Xanxus didn't mind the body pressed against him chasing off the coldness that ran along his nerves. He didn't need the easy way of relief but he wouldn't say no to it when it came in the form of one explosive blond with a potty mouth.

Katsuki doesn't ask questions. Just like how Xanxus doesn't ask why he doesn't just shoot those annoying legal guardians of his in the head and move on with his life. Some will call this an overreaction. Xanxus disagreed because he was Varia and Varia did not leave loose ends.

Then the old man came asking for the price for his release from the ice prison. There was another candidate for the Decimo spot. The real candidate with pure Vongola blood in his veins. Xanxus had been furious. To think the old farts in the family would rather choose a goddamn civilian with no actual impressive record on their resume than him, who was raised to lead. But the damn coot knew he wouldn't refuse one last desperate chance at claiming the throne so the ring battle happened.

His blood was too dirty for the ring. His role in this absurd script was over.

He was still Varia. Still their leader. Second rated. Stuck being second in the shadows. The crown would never be his was the message he got out of it all. So of course he was pissed when the old man showed up with Iemitsu, both of these men got what they wanted from that joke of a battle already and Xanxus had no intention of making peace with what they had done.

He didn't expect to see the kid barge into a meeting with the Ninth (the

Ninth because that man was not his father), all dressed up with hair extensions too. Xanxus could see the motherfucking Iemitsu choke on air and the bewilderment on his damn old man's face. They looked like deer caught in the headlights.

That kind of, ever so slightly, made his anger of seeing the old man all apologetic diminished a bit.

Katsuki leaned into his side, his fingers woven between Xanxus's. He didn't have to worry about burning him. The kid's quirk made the skin on his hand resistant to heat. The head of Varia allowed the blond to tighten his hand around his but he didn't return the gesture. Iemitsu looked horrified and confused at the same time and it just made his stupid face even uglier.

There was a curious arch to his old man's eyebrows but Xanxus ignored it. Katsuki had the whole act on. Sweet, lovely, and kind, Xanxus knew that was what his old man preferred, just look at that pathetic excuse of an heir they had chosen over him. But he also knew Katsuki couldn't fool Vongola's famous hyper intuition and Vongola Nono was confused. Very confused. It showed in his mannerism and Xanxus knew this because he had looked up to the old man at one point in his life. Thought of the guy as his father and family. Wanted to prove to him that even if he was just the bastard son, he was better than his other three brothers.

He was trying and failing to figure out what was wrong with Katsuki, or maybe Xanxus should say "Victoire".

Xanxus will not admit it but it was sort of amusing to watch. Imagine if the old fucker found out who Victoire really was but he only entertained the idea inside his head briefly. It was too early for that kind of revelation.

As soon as the Ninth left, Katsuki dropped the act. He wiped that disgusting smile off his face and kicked off his heels.

"Which scum set you up for this?" asked Xanxus.

Katsuki shot him a nasty glare. "All of them. All of your assortment of trash."

"And your plan was to act like a dumb blonde?"

"I was actually planning on dumping the hot tea on him by accident," he admitted with a shrug. "But the Young Lion's defense is fucking impermeable."

Xanxus snorted. "You're just too slow."

He got up because the room was trashed and he didn't feel like sitting in a place filled with shattered glass and where he could feel his old man with his sad eyes still watching him. Those eyes were filled with pain and forgiveness and it just made him want to burn everything to the ground.

Katsuki extended his arms to him.

"Walk on your own, trash."

"The heels hurt. And thanks to you the ground is hazardous to walk on."

"Fucking pussy."

Xanxus smacked him on the head but still picked him up. He scooped up the heels too and aimed them at the heads poking out from around the corner. There was a satisfying bonk and a string of curses that told him he hit one or two of them. Served them right for meddling.

The walk back to his room was silent. Xanxus threw the kid on the ground as soon as he set foot into his room, then he dropped himself on the sofa. Katsuki didn't complain about the rough treatment, he was used to it after all so he just climbed up and poured Xanxus a drink.

They were a cocktail of unhealthy interactions.

Xanxus had slapped him around more than once. Being a kid didn't spare the blond from his rage. But unlike his subordinates, Katsuki also retaliated by being as vicious as possible. Sometimes the tricks got downright dirty and the scratches and bites served as foreplay.

They don't usually hold conversations for long. Neither of them were very open or expressive about their *feelings* and they didn't like putting too much importance on small talks either. They were both men of action and not words. While they still let each other know if there was something important, they don't do the whole "How was your day?" or "How are you feeling?" kind of chit chat.

On the rare occasions where they *did* have raw conversations, it was more like one of them fuming and rambling while the other listened. Trashing rooms and screaming tantrums, both of them were really fucked up. Well, what else did they expect? One of them was a hero in training and the other a ruthless leader for a group of mafia assassins. Of course the kisses would be tainted with a scent of blood. But Xanxus had seen worse and they both knew when to draw a line so it was never really a problem.

He waved the kid over.

The blond unzipped the dress and it pooled at his feet, revealing the blue silk and pink lace underneath. It was one of those more vintage-style lingerie. Fancy and flimsy, easy to see through too. The toned lines of his muscles were barely shielded by the half transparent fabric.

Xanxus did not believe in love.

But he didn't hate the way Katsuki smiled when he showed him how to shoot or the shine in the kid's eyes when he looked at him. It was bearable. He didn't find these things as annoying as they should have been. He had thrown people—those who thought they could shoot up the ladder of power faster by climbing his bed—out windows for less.

He still despised this world. The lies and the pain, he hated all of it and he had no intention of ever kissing the ring to acknowledge Sawada Tsunayoshi as Vongola Decimo. He hated the man who pretended to be his father and was too cowardly to tell him the truth, to tell him that he would never be able to stand on the same starting line as all of his brothers (or even a random wimpy runt from another country) no matter how much he tried. He had a feeling that his brother knew the truth. The Ninth's guardians and CEDEF too. All of them. Did they laugh behind his back when they watched him strived for what they knew he would never be able to obtain?

But there were still some bearable things in this fucked up world. They weren't perfect. They had faults and scars and wounds so deep that time wasn't going to heal.

And for now, he was holding one of those things in his arms.

Chapter End Notes

I'm pretty sure Xanxus has a lot of issues (abandonment, anger management, issue with forming attachments/trust etc) and I don't believe that he was up and wrecking havoc immediately after he got released from the ice. Eight years of being in stasis, his muscles and organs would need some time to start functioning normally again.

Katsuki is the same. They are two messed up people making it work and coping. They don't do it in what could be consider a "healthy" way.

Anyways, hope you guys enjoyed this one. Next one: Sports

Festival

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Aizawa did not want to broadcast the Sports Festival with Present Mic. He would much rather sleep or watch it from a quiet corner but his old friend dragged him into the radio booth.

The Sports Festival had started normally enough. Midoriya placing first in the obstacle course was the most surprising highlight of the morning's portion of the competition. Aizawa liked the kid. Sure, Midoriya didn't have good control of his quirk and he seemed to lack self preservation but Aizawa could see his resolve to win. He was also glad his student was using his brain and not just recklessly forcing his way to get ahead with his quirk.

After the lunch break, it was the individual one-on-one battles. Aizawa took mental notes of how each of his kids did so he could better help them adjust their training in the future. The first year battles were usually simpler than the other grades' because the kids were still young and they hadn't had a lot of real battle training yet. Thus, most of them were too reliant on their quirks. But this was a fault that even some pros would fall victim to so he wasn't going to be too harsh of a critic about it.

Then it was time for the final battle of the first round.

Bakugou versus Uraraka. It was a bad matchup but Aizawa wouldn't say the outcome had already been determined just yet. His students, while they differed in abilities, were all determined and strong willed individuals. Just because Uraraka didn't have as strong of an offense type quirk, he wouldn't have deemed her to have already lost before the battle even began.

Bakugou was one of the kids who Aizawa was paying extra attention to. The boy had shown himself to be more than combat ready. He was gifted with natural battle instincts and he also excelled in academics. This was a kid who worked hard and he was confident in his abilities.

But Bakugou also had his faults. He wasn't what people would typically consider to be a good kid or a role model student. The blond

had a colourful language and he had this air of arrogance around him that deterred people away. It was strange really, because despite the way he carried himself, people still gravitated towards him and couldn't help but be in awe of his strength. Aizawa could also tell that Bakugou wasn't a bad apple. He had issues but he was also pure at heart.

He had reviewed all of his student's files before the school year began. Bakugou had been somewhat famous before he even got into UA. There was a case that All Might solved last year about a sludge villain who would try to take over people's bodies and Bakugou had been involved in it. The sludge villain had attempted to hijack his body but he was having a hard time catching the boy. The sludge wrecked a few electrical boxes and broke wires that caused a fire, stretching the heroes' manpower thin. It was a mess since the sludge villain had also taken another student hostage. He was threatening all of the heroes to stay back so he could find a chance to snatch up Bakugou's body and blast his way out.

Aizawa had been impressed when he read that part. Bakugou had danced with the villain in a game of cat and mouse for a good twenty minutes without getting caught with no help. Then Midoriya (Aizawa sighed, his most problematic child in the class so far had got to be this one) charged in, trying to help the hostage before All Might prevented what could have been a disaster with a single punch.

Absent-mindedly, Aizawa looked down and saw that Uraraka and Bakugou had both entered the arena. As Midnight announced the start of the battle, Uraraka charged forward and Bakugou engaged her with an explosion. There was some clamouring from the crowd, talking about how Bakugou was maybe being too harsh against a girl. However, none of those words interrupted the battle that was going on.

Uraraka was on the offense again but Bakugou bent backwards and dodged her hand that was reaching for him. Twisting his body, his leg came up and he kneed her in the stomach. Uraraka let out a choked noise of pain as her body flew back due to the force. But Bakugou wasn't done yet, he leaped after her.

It was over in a few seconds.

Bakugou sent Uraraka out of bounds with a single kick and stones fell from the sky as soon as the girl smacked into the grass. His speed and precision shocked the audience. While they did expect it to be a fast

match, they hadn't thought it would end this fast. Bakugou barely used his quirk and Uraraka, Aizawa felt a little bit bad for her. He knew she was planning something and had an ace up her sleeve but she didn't get to use it.

Bakugou's lightning reflex and combat skills were simply too much for her to keep up with.

"Uraraka is out of bounds! The winner is Katsuki Bakugou!" Midnight announced and her voice made the crowd wake up from their amazement. There was some applause but the crowd didn't seem to have received the results well.

"...He hit her pretty hard, didn't he?"
"Could have gone a little gentler if he's that much stronger than her..."

"His hand to hand is pretty good, I'll give him that."

"She got taken down really quick...heroes need to last longer on a battlefield..."

Aizawa did not like what the audience was saying. They were insulting both of the contestants with their criticism. They insulted Bakugou for taking the fight seriously and fighting with respect, regardless of his opponent's perceived disadvantage. He didn't take a fight lightly just because the other person was a different gender. And their words were also adding salt to injury on Uraraka as the girl suffered a crushing defeat.

The anger boiled inside his chest made him turn on his microphone and gave the audience a good one, telling the pros who were booing that they should retire their license early cause they clearly have no idea what they were talking about. His students fought well and tried their best, he wasn't going to let anyone ridicule them for doing so.

The next fights were standard. Vlad's kids from class B also put on a pretty good show of their abilities. The one thing Aizawa noted was that Bakugou was exceptionally better at fighting without his quirk than he first estimated. Aizawa knew from the usual training that they do that the blond was good. It was a combination of talent and hard work that allowed him to get this exceptional at it and he showcased it even back when they had the first battle training.

But Bakugou's judgement had been clouded by his emotions then so his movements weren't as sharp as today's. From what Aizawa could tell, he and Midoriya had some bad history. They don't get along, just

like oil and water.

Bakugou beat Kirishima with judo. He had locked the red head with his thigh and choked him just enough that Kirishima lost consciousness. Then he defeated Tokoyami with a flash bomb he created with his explosions. Both battles had been short and it didn't look like Bakugou was planning on slowing down.

"Sorry but I got bastards watching." Was what he told Tokoyami after he won that round. Aizawa assumed he meant his parents since he was no stranger to Bakugou's vulgar vocabulary. He tended to give people nicknames that might sound insulting but there was no malice in his tone when he said them.

Bakugou was quick on his feet and agile in the air. Aizawa wondered how many different martial arts classes the blond took as a kid to get this skilled at fighting. He seemed to be familiar with a wide variety of martial arts. Even Todoroki wasn't as used to fighting as he was.

"Man, Bakugou's really killing it down there isn't he? Might not be a record time since Todoroki took out Sero with that wall of glaciers but he's doing well. You sure got a bunch of monsters in your class this year," Present Mic complimented when he stopped to take a drink of water.

"He's saving his strength for the finale." Quirks were like muscles, overusing them caused pain and eventually they would reach a limit. Aizawa knew Bakugou hadn't gone all out with his explosions yet, and that might be because he was controlling it to not kill his classmates.

After USJ happened, he had talked to All Might about what had happened. The No.1 hero said that Bakugou had stabbed a log of broken pipe into Nomu's neck and set off an explosion inside its mouth. The explosion had been huge and the flames that followed were a breathtakingly angry red. It blew Nomu to bits so it would certainly be out of commission for a long time. Even took a portion of the ground with the blast and the police found some melted metal that used to belong to a gun nearby during the investigation afterwards. The weapon must have been dropped by one of the villains and got caught up in the explosion.

And no, Nomu was not dead. The hyper regeneration quirk was allowing it to heal itself together.

Since it was an emergency and the villain wasn't truly what could be considered human any longer, Bakugou wasn't punished for it.

However, he was required to get a bit of counseling.

The final fight came down to Todoroki VS Bakugou.

Aizawa realized there was something wrong immediately. Todoroki was not at his best mentally. There was something off about him after he fought Midoriya and it was showing in the way he fought Bakugou. He was back to using only his ice again. Aizawa knew the boy had some issues with his fire since he had refused to use it from the beginning of the school year. Maybe it had something to do with his father. Aizawa suspected that Todoroki might not be on good terms with his father, the No.2 hero Endeavor.

“Todoroki’s moves are a bit too simple,” Present Mic said through the microphone. They were still making commentary on the battle. Both boys down there had strong quirks so the fight was flashy and loud, with shattered ice catching the light, glistening and flying around.

Bakugou noticed that Todoroki was off his game as well. He screamed and yelled about how Todoroki should get off the stage if he wasn’t planning on fighting seriously. Todoroki had been silent as he pushed the blond back with a wall of ice.

And Bakugou was absolutely seething at this point. Aizawa could see his face twisting with rage on the screen.

"If you don’t want to fight properly with the full power of your quirk then fine!" He stomped his foot then picked up a long piece of ice from the ground. It was a long and thin piece, almost rod shaped. Bakugou also took another chunk of ice and as he pivoted on his feet, he threw the chunk of ice at Todoroki.

Then Bakugou vanished from his spot.

“Where did he—” Present Mic pressed his face against the glass to see better. “There! Bakugou is on the offense!”

Aizawa saw the blond reappear just a few steps away from Todoroki, who had dodged the ice and was struggling to react to the sudden shortened distance between him and his opponent. The ice rod in Bakugou’s hand lounged forward and scraped by the side of Todorki’s face, cutting a thin line of red.

Frost and ice shot up, forging a pillar between them so Bakugou did a backflip to get away from getting caught. The ice rod stabbed into the ground and the blond used it as a pole to swing himself around as he

dropkicked Todoroki. Unable to handle his weight, the ice snapped but Bakuogu was already moving on. He barely stopped to catch his breath as his feet touched the ground before he leaped forward again, going after Todoroki.

Todoroki supported himself off the ground with his hand and the air down there seemed to be frozen too as he exhaled a puff of white cloud.

“Bakugou stopped using his quirk?”

“Is there a limit to his explosion then?”

The crowd was talking again. They were all confused just like Aizawa and Present Mic as to why Bakugou wasn’t using his quirk anymore. Frowning, Aizawa didn’t know what to make of this turn of events. Bakugou was being spiteful. He was getting back at Todoroki for not fighting with both his ice and fire. The man didn’t know if this was a stupid move or not because Bakugou was *winning*.

He wasn’t at a disadvantage even if he wasn’t using his quirk.

“It’s Muay Thai,” Present Mic observed as Bakguou drove a knee into Todoroki’s arms. “I didn’t know Bakugou knew Muay Thai. This boy is full of surprises isn’t he?”

Aizawa did not know Bakugou’s skill set included Muay Thai either. His stance was quite professional too.

Bakugou wiped the liquid from the melted ice on his hands on his pants. It looked like Todoroki was saying something to him but it was too quiet to hear. Aizawa assumed he was asking why Bakugou stopped with the explosions.

Bakugou only sneered at him and there was a challenge on the curve of his lips. He was calm. Aizawa was baffled and amazed at the conflicting properties Bakugou constantly exhibited whenever he was in a fight. One the outside he might look brash but his every move was calculated and carried out with precision.

The blond vanished again. His speed seemed to have increased as he appeared behind Todoroki. Spikes of ice sprouted from the ground but Bakugou flipped right over them, barely brushing by the sharp ends. Bakugou’s foot landed on Todoroki’s chest, sending the other teen to fall back. Aizawa heard Midoriya and some of his other students yelling about not throwing the battle and cheering their friends on.

Clenching his teeth, there was a spark of flame that ignited along his left side. There was a hissing as the ice began to melt under the heat and a mist of water vapor filled the air.

That was when a fist hit his jaw from below.

The impact sent his head rolling back and he went limp, falling back onto the ground completely out cold.

Bakugou shook his hand as if he was trying to shake the numbness off. There was some frost on his gym clothing but otherwise, he was fine. His red eyes landed on Todoroki's unconscious body and spat, "I told you not to look down on me. Fuck you, trash."

Silence fell upon the stadium.

Aizawa saw Endeavor in the stands and he was not happy at all. His face, the portion that wasn't covered in flames, looked like it was a mix of all the colours there was in the world and his lips were pursed into a tight line.

Midnight announced Bakugou as the winner and the blond turned to stomp off the stage, still quietly fumming. The reviews from the audience were a mix of awe and suspicion. The battle went against what people were used to after all. Everyone knew that heroes were basically defined by their quirks and they expected flashy battles from the sports festival. What Bakugou did, while impressive and efficient, wasn't dramatic enough. It seemed like an abrupt end on a low note for a festival so great.

It was a let down and some were questioning if Bakugou took this fight seriously.

Aizawa disagreed. Being a hero didn't mean being as flamboyant as possible. While that was what people liked to see, it doesn't get the job done on an actual crime scene. His students had put on a good fight in his opinion.

Present Mic turned off his microphone and whispered to Aizawa: "Hey, Eraser. Is it just me or is that kid a little *too* good?"

Bakugou was good. Skilled. Too good. He had beaten the No.2 hero's son, who was probably trained professionally since he was young, *without* a quirk. Aizawa made a mental note to ask Bakugou where he had learned martial arts later because whoever taught him clearly knew what they were doing. He was sure Nezu wouldn't mind to

commission them to come teach the hero course students a thing or two if they were willing.

They all still have a long way to go in terms of becoming a great hero.

For now, he'd just applaud his students' efforts.

The award ceremony wasn't anything like what Katsuki had expected it to be. He felt awful. This first place was meaningless in his eyes since fucking Ice Hot couldn't bother to fight him properly.

Katsuki was pissed. He felt like Todoroki was looking down on him since he didn't get why Todoroki couldn't fight him properly. That damn Half-and-Half fought *Deku* with all he had got so why couldn't he fight him with the same efforts? He didn't understand it. While he did overheard when Todoroki and Midoriya were talking, Bakugou thought it was stupid that Todoroki didn't want to use his fire simply because his dad was a dick.

It went against everything that he knew. In Varia, you die if you try to half ass a mission. You'd get a sword in your neck or a bullet in your chest if you didn't give it all you've got. That was what a fight was. What a *battle* meant. It was either life or death and there was no inbetween so you gotta give everything you have to survive.

If he didn't have a will to fight, he shouldn't have entered the arena in the first place. So yeah, being the "spiteful bitch" (Squalo's words) that he was, Bakugou opted to defeat him without his quirk. Both Ice Hot and his awful dad can suck it. Quirks weren't everything that made someone strong and if they were really that hung up about fire, they obviously haven't seen Xanxus's Flame of Wrath before. Now, *that* was hellfire.

Katsuki did not want to go on the podium and receive a medal for winning a pointless fight. That piece of metal was just an insult and nothing else but the teachers kept pestering him about it in the break rooms.

Midnight sighed as she stood before him.

"Bakugou, it is important that we present the winners. By the rules of the competition, you won. Please stop being stubborn and just step onto the podium along with your peers."

Todoroki had woken up too and he walked past Katsuki. There was an odd look in his eyes as he glanced at the blond, almost as if he was looking at the most confusing puzzle there was in the world. Katsuki gave him the middle finger and a glare, which earned him a stern cough from Cementoss.

That was when Katsuki got a bright idea that he knew the jackass squad of trash back in Italy would enjoy.

“Fine, I’ll receive that stupid medal,” he told Midnight, who was surprised by his sudden change of heart. “But you have to lend me your whip.”

She agreed after he promised he wouldn’t be using it on any humans.

And that was how they all ended up on the podium. Bird-brains and Ice Hot were on either side of him. There was confetti and ribbons, balloons and cheers, everything was so festive that he could puke. He might have enjoyed this spotlight if he had won this stupid thing fair and square the hero way but no, he had gotten this far with the skills he picked up from a group of assassins. The colours were revolting to him and he could hear the low murmurs from the crowds too. Talking about how he wasn’t smiling enough for the camera and questioning why the hell he looked so goddamn moody even though he won a great honor.

Fucking extras have no idea what they were talking about. Victoire didn’t smile much unless it was required either and people loved *her* for it.

All Might was the one to hand out the medals. He gave Katsuki’s classmates hugs and advice too. When it came to Katsuki’s turn, the blond teen didn’t let the man place the medal around his neck and All Might didn’t push it either. He handed the medal over.

This was what Bakugou was waiting for.

With one hand, he tossed the medal in the air and saw the confusion flashed across All Might and Midnight’s faces. Katsuki swung the whip and the multiple ends of the weapon cut through the medal in the air. It sliced the metal into a few small pieces and they rained down, bouncing off the cement podium and landing into the grass.

There was a collective gasp of surprise and horror from the audience.

Katsuki bowed dramatically. They wanted him to be humble didn’t

they? Well, he would show them just how *humble* he could be.

The hand that he used to swing the whip was stiff and it hurted a bit since he doesn't normally use whips as his first choice of weapon. He only picked up a few tricks here and there because there were Varia guys who used whips and he had seen a short clip about Cavallone's boss with a whip.

Midnight's face was red. Hey, he said he was going to take it but he never made any promises on what he would do with it afterwards. The looks on everyone's faces almost made him laugh but he held it in.

He was pretty sure he'd get in shit with his parents for this later but whatever. It felt good to leave all his teachers, classmates, and the audience speechless. The rest of the award ceremony went by like a blur. Midnight and All Might quickly wrapped things up and the podium was lowered, taking all three students away from the crowd's stunned stares.

"That wasn't very honourable," Tokoyami said as Katsuki jumped off the podium. "But the whip trick was cool."

At least someone appreciates it.

Katsuki waved but he didn't look back as he marched out of the room with his head held high. He was going home. They'd have a day off tomorrow and his parents would arrive back home around seven in the morning from their business trip. That gave him some time to check in with the idiot squad of blood thirsty assassins before this feeling of triumph would be soured by his parents.

Maybe somewhere deep down he hoped they'd take his side this time. To listen to him and understand that he didn't *win* that medal properly in a good hero battle. It was a fight out of spite and anger, nothing else.

But he knew that was wishful thinking.

That night, he sat in his room with a video chat on. It was one of those hologram communicators, specially made for his communication with Xanxus. He doesn't always pick up and Katsuki was used to that. He knew despite how often Squalo complained that Xanxus was being a spoiled lazy prick, the man actually did his work. He wouldn't have Varia running so well if he was an actual sleazy douchebag who slacked off.

After a few rings, it was Lussuria who picked up. He must have been waiting since he looked overjoyed.

“I’m so proud of you, honey!” Lussuria blew him kisses on the screen. His thick lips were covered in a thin layer of shiny lip gloss and the fur around his jacket was a hot pink today. “Muay Thai really is the best form of martial arts out there isn’t it?”

Before Katsuki could answer, Lussuria got pushed out of the way and a crown came into view. Golden hair and a wide pearl white smile, Belphegor showed up with Mammon in his arms. Since Mammon's body was so small, sometimes they’d rest on one of their shoulders or get carried around if Bel or Katsuki was feeling nice.

“That competition was boring. No weapons allowed? Ushishishi, the whole thing would have been over in half the time if they just gave you a knife.”

“Those kids’ lives would be over if they gave him a knife, you idiot. Heroes don’t kill. At least they don’t do it on life TV.” Squalo’s loud voice could be heard but Katsuki couldn’t see him.

“Remember to send me more Victoire pictures later, the theme is purple.” Mammon read off a list they have in their tiny hands. “Also, I scheduled you for a street fashion shot in Tokyo this weekend. The location is in the email I forwarded. That’s also followed by an autograph signing event so make sure you bring a change of clothing that is more formal.”

Katsuki nodded. Looked like he was going to be busy this weekend. He would need to be careful not to get too beaten up if something sets the Hag off. “Where’s Xanxus?”

There was some crushing and a few loud crashing sounds from Varia’s side and the screen shook violently for a second.

“VOI! The fuck are you doing, Levi?”

Katsuki could see Squalo now and the man was complaining as he climbed up from the ground.

“Boss threw me out for being too noisy.” The larger man wiped his face with his hand and he waved at the blond. He was holding some folders in his other hand.“Katsuki, Boss wants to see you. He also said that the rest of us can scam.”

The last part seemed to have made him a bit sad but he quickly soaked it up. He ran off mumbling about how he was going to complete all these missions and then Xanxus would be proud of him.

Belphegor gave a half shrug and went out the window and Mammon dissipated into the air after reminding Katsuki about his work once more.

Squalo scooped up the communicator and he threw it into the office while yelling something along the lines of “Shitty Boss”. To be honest, none of them expected Xanxus to get off his ass to come grab the communicator himself. The screen blurred for another moment and then Katsuki finally saw his boyfriend’s face.

Xanxus was his usual self. He was handsome but it was the dangerous kind of handsome that usually scared people off before they could or even dared to get a good look at him, especially with the scars on his face. There was no smile on his face but Katsuki could tell he wasn’t in a bad mood.

“You should have stabbed the ice into that dual coloured brat’s shoulder from the beginning,” said Xanxus lazily as he refilled his glass.

Katsuki felt warmth filling his fluttering heart. “So you *did* watch the Sports Festival!”

“I didn’t,” Xanxus huffed. His eyes were half closed as he took a sip of whatever alcohol caught his interest. “Those trash have been yelping about it and they’re getting annoying.”

The blond decided that he was going to ignore that last comment. He knew that Xanxus cared and it was these little moments that felt even more precious than gold to him. Xanxus wasn’t a man who would openly admit how he felt or knelt down with kisses and sweet words. Katsuki was alright with that cause he knew he could still rely on the man. They don't get to see or even talk to each other often since they a) Lived in different countries with different time zones and b) Xanxus's schedule was not set because assassinations could take part at all hours of the day and Varia was busy. Heck, Katsuki was pretty sure he communicated with Mammon more than he did with Xanxus on a daily basis. Not to mention, Xanxus doesn't do chats or texts, Katsuki could send them but he rarely replied. The calls were sparse too.

He knew the why. The man was mafia. But sometimes it does get

quite lonely so whenever they got the chance to be together, it always resulted in them wanting some form of physical contact. Katsuki was embarrassed by this but more often than not, he was the one to initial the hugs and kisses. He was addicted to it, addicted to the feeling of a hand around his waist and the steady sound of heartbeat against his ears. It was pathetic and sappy but he just couldn't help himself.

His fingers found the necklace around his neck. It was a simple bronze bullet tied around his neck with a thin silver chain. Xanxus had infused his flames in it in case of emergencies.

It was a last resort kind of thing and he used the previous one up back during the USJ incident. Katsuki had grabbed the gun from one of the fallen villains and loaded it with the bullet then fired it while setting off an explosion to go with it inside Nomu's mouth. Normal guns couldn't handle the flames so it melted. Katsuki was a bit scared that he might get questioned but he didn't want to see his teachers or even stupid Deku die. Thankfully he got off the hook easy.

Katsuki told Xanxus that stabbing his opponent would probably make the referee stop the whole battle and the audience would deem it as use of excessive force. Midnight had told him that during her attempt to persuade him to get on the podium. He didn't really understand it. UA can send giant robots on them, his classmates can electrify people, burn or freeze them and he could explode them but *stabbing* was a big fat no? This was completely baffling.

"Cause all they care about is quirks," Xanxus reminded him. "Those scum are nothing without their quirks."

Katsuki grumbled an agreement as he held his pillow tight. It was less so in Italy with their heavy mafia presence but everywhere else, the emphasis on quirks, what made a heroic quirk and what classified as villainous quirks were like labels that people can't shake. Speaking of labels, he got even more pissed as he remembered his fight with Round Face. He fought her with respect and didn't toyed with her. It wasn't his fault that she couldn't keep up and the fight ended early so how dare those extras make him the villain in that story?

What was he supposed to do? Not fight her? Or treat her like some damsel in distress as he kindly asked her to step out of bounds on her own? Bullshit. She wasn't so weak that she needed to be handled as if she was made of glass. That girl had planned to stone him for crying out loud!

He didn't check his phone or turn on the TV since he knew the Sports Festival would be all people talk about for a few days. He knew from his time as Victoire that some comments will get downright dirty and mean so it was better to just not see them for now. Mammon always told him to just focus on the number of zeros increasing in their bank accounts. That was the main purpose of "Victoire" anyways. But he can't do the same with "Katsuki".

Katsuki was going to be a hero, not just a money making machine.

"People are stupid," he concluded at the end of his rant. "I got a feeling that a lot of them are going to tell me to change the way I am but I don't have to listen to them. I'm not their bitch."

"No, you're mine."

Blushing, he threw the pillow but it passed through the hologram harmlessly. "...Pervert."

There was a faint mark of a smile that was making its way onto Xanxus's lips but his eyes suddenly darted to the space behind Katsuki's back. The blond also swivelled around as fast as he could and his smile dropped immediately. The warmth in his heart was gone and his muscles were tense as he grabbed a dagger out from under the bedsheets.

Katsuki stood up and ice lined his words: "You better have a real good reason for why you're here."

"Ciaossu," The figure tilted his hat politely at the owner of the room. "I am here to make a proposal."

Chapter End Notes

I think I am doing the BAKUGOU IS A LITTLE SHIT tag justice :)

Next one: Tsuna hates Reborn & The making of the Hero Killer Stain

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Windigo is an OC.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Tsuna was pretty sure his brain was messing with him. Or that Reborn was up to no good again. Otherwise, why would *Bakugou Katsuki* be outside his door on a Saturday morning?

The brown haired teen stood with his mouth hanging open stupidly and his hand on the doorknob. Of course he knew who the guy was. The UA student's face was on nearly every channel yesterday and those videos of him fighting his fellow classmates were still being replayed on the internet.

Some people said Bakugou was too arrogant, acting all high and mighty as he disrespected his opponents throughout the whole festival. Some didn't like the way he had fought, saying that it wasn't very gentlemen-like to have been so harsh on a girl. But there were also praises for his combat skills and battle instinct. He had a dangerous quirk but he didn't use it excessively as he took down his opponents. And he won against Endeavor's kid quirkless! That was an impressive feat on its own considering he didn't have a professional training background.

The reviews were mixed. Some loved him, others hated him. There were also a few creepy comments that leaned towards the inappropriate side.

Tsuna and his friends had watched the Sports Festival while eating snacks. Gokudera even took notes on a few of the UA students' moves.

And now the first year's champion was standing in front of him.

Bakugou Katsuki was paler in person. He had flaming red eyes and ash blond hair and he was taller than Tsuna. The blond was also scowling as he stood there with a backpack slung over his shoulder.

"Can I help you?" Tsuna asked.

“I’m your Italian tutor.” Bakugou nodded at him after giving Tsuna a quick scan over. Tsuna scratched his head sheepishly since he knew he must have looked like a mess. He had just woken up and he barely brushed his hair yet. His brown hair was messier than usual. Maybe he should have known something was wrong when Reborn didn’t wake him up with a hammer or blaring alarms this morning.

Italian. Alright, Tsuna knew who was trying to give him a heart attack now. He was also getting a sense of dejavu. Reborn had popped up inside his room randomly claiming to be his tutor when he first showed up too. “...This is Reborn’s doing again isn’t it?”

“I would appreciate it if he didn’t just randomly pop into my room.” Came the sarcastic reply.

“You and me both,” Tsuna muttered. Reborn’s habit of showing up in random places was annoying. What if they had been doing something embarrassing like singing in their underwear?

“Tsuna! Who’s at the door?”

His mom poked her head out of the kitchen. She was a nice woman, the kindest and sweetest housewife who was completely devoted to her husband. Although there were times that it didn’t feel like she was completely in the present and now, she cooked and cared for him with all her love.

Sometimes Tsuna would rather she just dump his deadbeat dad and move on. His father was never around much anyways. He was too busy being the external advisor for Vongola than to visit or call them. The man couldn’t even come up with some believable lies about what he did for a living. Seriously, digging for diamonds in the South Pole? Only his mom would believe that absurd lie!

“It’s...um-um…?” Tsuna wasn’t sure how to explain this. A friend? They literally just met five minutes ago. His mom was coming out of the kitchen. She had an apron on and her shoulder length brown hair was clipped back with a hairclip.

“I’m here to teach Tsuna Italian as per Reborn’s request,” Katsuki greeted. He hadn’t been overly polite or smiled a lot but he was a lot more humble and calm than Tsuna had expected. Different from what he had seen on TV.

“Oh, you’re Tsuna and Reborn’s friend then? Welcome,” the woman smiled at him and welcomed him in. She offered him something to

drink as well as a plate of snacks too. Tsuna ushered the blond to his room, in case Reborn had another stunt ready to go. And Reborn *always* had something else planned. All of his schemes were linked like a domino effect and they eventually came back to Tsuna's training to become the next Don.

Tsuna didn't want to worry his mom with all this mafia stuff. *He* didn't want to be involved in this mafia stuff either.

Reborn was waiting for them in his room. He was in his usual black suit and a fedora hat, along with the yellow pacifier hanging around his neck. Fuuta and Bianchi were also playing cards beside him. They passed by Tsuna when he opened the door since Reborn asked them to leave.

"Reborn!" Tsuna yelled as soon as he saw the baby hitman. "What is going on? You're dragging hero course students into this mafia nonsense now too? "

Heroes and Mafia did not go together. At all.

"I'm not dragging him into the mafia mess. If anything, he's overachieving that part on his own already."

"What do you mean?" Tsuna had a bad feeling about this.

Reborn shook his head as he sipped on his coffee. "This isn't the first time you two have met, Dame-Tsuna. Isn't that right, Bakugou?"

"I hate you," Bakugou spat back and he looked murderous.

Tsuna turned back and studied Bakugou more closely. He was sure he hadn't met Bakugou before. He would have remembered if he had met someone so fiery and explosive as the blond before. The blond hair and the red eyes were distinguishing features too. Long lashes and that sharpness in his eyes...wait, where had he seen that before?

Thinking harder, Tsuna deconstructed Bakugou's features inside his head. If he took away the scowls and the frowns, the blond actually looked kind of familiar. His eyes landed on one of the magazines that Bianchi had been reading and there was a model on the cover.

Blonde. Red eyes. Fierce.

"Victoire?" Tsuna blurted out while the other occupants of the room stared at him. With a shaky finger, he pointed at Bakugou as the

words struggled to come free out of his mouth. “YOU’RE V—”

A hand silenced him forcefully.

“Keep your voice down, stupid. The whole damn neighbourhood is going to hear you.” Bakugou pushed him back down in his chair and made sure Tsuna knew to keep his mouth shut before he released him. “Took you fucking long enough to figure that out.”

“Wait, do you know how many of my classmates literally *idolize* you. They have your photo as their screensaver a-and some of the guys are seriously madly in love with you!” Tsuna exclaimed in a hushed tone. Victoire’s magazines (they sold out quickly) got passed around between the male students and a good portion of the female population of the school liked to gossip about her. Hair and makeup, fashion and heels, Victoire set the trend. And there were even fanclubs for her.

“Kind of the point of being an international model. Of course they love Victoire, she’s hot.” Bakugou shrugged while casually complimenting himself in third person. He also sat down on the ground and started taking out a pile of what looked like an Italian dictionary and some workbooks.

“Oh my god and you’re dating Xanxus!”

Tsuna was sure they could fit an apple into his mouth right now. Xanxus wasn’t just dating a model. He was dating a hero course student! Mafia and Hero! He didn’t know if that should be horrifying or worrying.

Bakugou turned to Reborn. “Is he always this dramatic and noisy?”

“We still have a long way to go,” Reborn replied.

“Okay, okay...” Tsuna calmed himself down. Xanxus was dating a model who happened to also be a guy and a hero in training. That wasn’t the weirdest thing he had seen since Reborn showed up at his house announcing that he was going to be Vongola Decimo. In fact, it was probably the least violent thing so far. “So, what are you doing here and what do you mean you’re my Italian tutor?”

“This bastard here,” Bakugou said as he pointed at Reborn. “Showed up at my place and said that in exchange for teaching you Italian, he’d teach me how to activate my cloud flames. Xanxus said it was fine and if you became too annoying, I can explode your ass.”

A menacing grin spreaded over his lips.

“Just so you know, I don’t give much crap about this mafia business but I still think Xanxus would make a better Don than you.”

Tsuna gulped.

“Um, Reborn’s asking you to teach me?” That was weird. Tsuna would have expected Reborn asking Gokudera, who was half Italian, to teach him since it would qualify as family (in the mafia sense) bonding time. Gokudera would have agreed happily too since he wanted to be Decimo’s right hand man. Or Reborn could have done it himself with some kind of torture device ready to force Tsuna to learn.

Reborn kicked him in the shin and Tsuna yelped out in pain.

“Gokudera would have been too soft on you,” Reborn said as if he had read Tsuna’s mind. “Also, it is important for the boss to have a good relationship with all departments inside the family. Since Bakugou is intimate with Xanxus, winning his favor is your ticket into improving your relationship with Varia.”

Tsuna didn’t want to get close to Varia. The last time they were physically in the same space, they had threatened to kill him and all of his friends. And Xanxus scared him. A lot. He was pretty sure the man also wanted to put a stake through his heart if he had the chance.

Bakugou sparked off before Tsuna could muster up a reply. The embers and noise drew Tsuna’s attention to him.

“Sit your ass down, Sawada. The class starts now,” Bakugou ordered and his scarlet eyes...oh gods, Tsuna had an eerie sense that he was being stared down by Xanxus himself and his knees went weak.

He had absolutely no idea how *this* can turn into the girl with pearl white smiles on the magazine covers. Still, he wasn’t about to argue with a human grenade so he sat down and opened the book in front of him.

Reborn was smiling at him. Large dark eyes filled with a sadistic sense of joy as he watched Tsuna outwardly groan at the letters inside the book. They just looked like random scribbles of oddly shaped letters to him. They made no sense and his head was already spinning.

Tsuna prayed to the universe that he would survive until dinner time.

Life liked to take weird turns and throw the most absurd of obstacles at people when they least expected it.

Akaguro Chizome didn't really have any idea how his life turned out like this. He had been disappointed in the hero system in Japan so he set out to make things right. Those pretty faces on the billboards weren't *heroes*. They were fakers and scammers who didn't understand what being a hero really meant.

He had started cleaning the streets of Japan of these cancers when he ran into a nightmare of an opportunity. People in the underground world called him Prince The Ripper. He was a teenager with short golden hair that covered his eyes and wore a thin silver crown on his head. They said he was a genius assassin and he was one of Varia's.

At that time, Akaguro was just what the media would call a "rookie villain". He was young and still figuring out a lot of things. His skills weren't as sharp and his techniques a bit lacking. Although he had the conviction (he chopped off his own nose for it too), he hadn't completely figured out the ins and outs of the darker side of society yet either.

In the dirty little bars hidden deep in the alleys, he listened to the men and women whom society considered as trash chit chat. There were small-time thieves, retired yakuza, some mafia, and other people from all sorts of shady trades. Most of their conversations were meaningless but he would catch information about rotten heroes or some villain who were truly awful. Petty thieves and those likes weren't high on his priority but robbers and rapists? Akauguro wouldn't mind adding a few more bodies to his tally.

Akaguro's purge wasn't just limited to corrupted heroes. He would gladly take out those who abused their powers to hurt others for their own benefits too. This was necessary if he wanted to correct society.

From what he gathered, Varia was a group of Italian villains. Assassins to be exact and they do kills that no one else can. They were a vicious group of the most unhinged monsters in the underground world. But they were professionals. The best of the best.

Sounded like people that belonged on his hit list.

But Akaguro was just one man and he didn't have the energy to plan an attack on a well organized crime syndicate located in another

country. He was starting out small. Low ranking heroes and normal criminals without much ties, eventually he would start making a larger impact when he got stronger.

He had been out one night to make a statement when he ran into Prince The Ripper.

The boy was in a dark uniform and a striped shirt. Knee high boots and a crown, he was exactly how those rumors described him to be. He wore a wide grin on his face that normally wouldn't have been alarming but it was the most creepy thing Akaguro had seen tonight as they stood in that dark alley behind an arcade.

There was a man lying on the ground between them. Blood pooled beneath him, seeping into the cracks on the pavement as the light left his eyes. He was a contracted killer, Akaguro realized. Not a big shot but he was local and a regular down at that grim bar.

"Shishishi...you're on this side too aren't you?" the teenager had asked. His laughter was like the sound of nails scratching on a blackboard to Akaguro's ears. "How many have you killed?"

Akaguro didn't need any more confirmation to know that this kid was too far gone. He was a monster in human skin. A sociopath with a thirst for blood. There was no redemption for someone like him and he didn't tumble down the path of shadows and death because of some tragedy. No, Akaguro could tell the boy had chosen his way of life willingly.

So the man decided to kill him.

He wanted to make it quick, one cut for the blood and another slash into the heart. Although he killed, he was no monster so he would like to let the teen not be as disfigured or dismembered when he was done with him.

Things went terribly wrong as soon as a drop of red dripped from the Prince of Ripper's hand. Akaguro had made a small nick on his hand. The wound couldn't have been more than a centimeter long and the cut had been so shallow that there was nothing staining his knife as he drew back to avoid the daggers flying his way.

But the blond had looked down and saw the small droplet of red forming on his pale skin and *completely* lost it.

Akaguro learned that day what a ragdoll being thrashed around in a

tornado made of knives felt. The daggers kept coming. It wasn't a quirk. Or maybe it was. He couldn't spare the energy to think too deep about it as a storm of daggers ran down upon him. There was nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. He could deflect a few with his blades and swords but he still grunted in pain as more embedded themselves into his flesh.

His own blood mixed with dead killer's. The prince's crown had a silver gleam to it as the metal caught on the dim blinking light above a rusty door. Akaguro was losing too much blood so his brain was turning into a foggy mash so his vision was blurry and his muscles stiffening from the coldness.

He didn't want to die. Akaguro wasn't afraid of death. He wouldn't be haunting heroes and villains if he was afraid to die. This was a dangerous line of work after all. The one thing he did have regrets about was that his goal, his *purge* haven't even started to gain traction yet. People still wallowed in their delusional beliefs of what a hero was. They have lost their way and there was no one to cleanse them of these impurities that poisoned their society.

Before he fully lost consciousness, he saw the teenager, no, now that they were up close, the blond was more like a preteen, bending over him.

"The prince has decided that you have earned the honour of being my servant."

And that was how Akaguro woke up in Italy.

It was a kidnapping. Never in his life before had he ever thought he would get *kidnapped.* By a teenager too!

He woke up in a room that was very European styled. The walls were gray and there were heavy drapes that covered the window. It wasn't big since it only contained a bed, a closet, and a desk with one chair. Looking out the window, Akaguro saw some greens from a tree but the majority of the view was obscured by a brick wall.

"Oh good, you're up." The door opened and someone came in with a bag and a tray with two bowls. She was in the same black uniform that the blond teen wore. Her dark hair was chopped short and there were tattoos all over her right hand. The woman looked like she was from the Middle East but she had a heavy Italian accent when she spoke Japanese.

"...Who are you?"

"You can call me Windigo." She threw the bag onto the bed and offered him one of the bowls. When Akaguro didn't take it, she sat down on the only chair and started eating. Between bites, she also explained a few things to him. "Welcome to Varia. His Highness thought you would be a good addition to the team so I guess we are colleagues now."

Through her blabbering, Akaguro understood that he was in the base for Italy's most notorious assassins. Varia belonged to Vongola and anyone who was anybody on the shady side of the law knew Vongola. They were the largest and most powerful mafia family, whose influence spread far and wide all across the globe.

Akaguro also learned that Prince The Ripper was a highly ranked executive of this organization. All he could think about was how low this world had fallen to have a child live such a corrupted life of crime and blood. Those heroes kept boasting about how with them around, crime was at its lowest but they were just pretty words for the press. They were fakes who let too many people fall through the cracks and into the darkness.

They were no heroes.

"I didn't agree to join you." Akaguro got up and he was prepared to fight her if she tried to stop him. "I'm leaving."

"Okay."

Pausing, he started to second guess if there was a trap waiting for him outside the doors. "...You're not going to stop me or keep persuading me?"

The woman just continued to slurp her chicken noodle soup loudly. "Have fun trying to get back to Japan on your own with no passport and no money. If you can make it out the front gates first that is."

Yep, there was definitely a trap waiting outside. But Akaguro didn't have time to waste with these Italian villains. He had a job to finish back in Japan.

It didn't take Akaguro long to figure out that he was not going to make it out of this damn place alive. This house—*castle*—was trying to kill him around every corner! He didn't know if there was some kind of hallucination gas in the air or if it was someone's quirk, but he

could see the walls closing in and grass and bones growing from the ground. They tangled him into a cocoon, shielding the light away and dragged him into a sheer darkness. He'd step on solid ground only for it to crumble and sharp teeths sunk into his flesh. The pain was numbing.

He didn't even make it down the hall.

"Morning again!" Windigo chirped when he opened his eyes.

"Why do you people want me?"

"Cause one of our higher officers said you have talent and we're just following orders. Besides, this place ain't so bad. You might even get something out of it."

"Like what?"

She threw him a pair of uniforms similar to hers. "If you're late, Captain Squalo is going to kill you!"

Akaguro reluctantly changed and followed behind her. He had planned on threatening her to help him get back to Japan but she wasn't weak or naive. Her guard was always up and her fists ready even if she didn't act serious. It was also hard to cut her when she could turn her skin into copper.

He then met some other Varia recruits in a field. They weren't friendly to him, which was expected and honestly he had been too busy marking down a map of the place in order to formulate an escape plan in his head to care.

Captain Squalo was a young man with shoulder length silver hair. He was loud and his sword *will* cut them if they can't keep up.

If hell did have eighteen levels, Varia would be level nineteen and a half. Their training was the most gruesome thing Akaguro had ever experienced in his life. Squalo pushed and pushed, pushing everyone beyond their limits and by the end of it all, Akaguro was pretty sure he had to be dragged back from death's doors.

He stayed. Varia paid well enough and it was a place to sharpen his skills. They were the finest of elite assassins who got things other people thought was impossible done. Skills and money were two things that Akaguro needed in order to accomplish his dreams too. Although young, Captain Squalo was also a decent leader and his

swordsmanship was astonishing. Prince The Ripper, Belphegor, was skilled with daggers and Akaguro devoted a lot of his time into studying how the teen used his weapons.

Belphegor was nuts. All of Vaira was bat shit crazy.

But they were also highly skilled.

What Vaira did was also acceptable in Akaguro's eyes. They killed traffickers, murdered corrupted politicians, took down rival mafia families...in a sense, they were helping society get rid of a few cancerous cells too. The mafia was different from what he imagined. They weren't just men in it for the profit and would do all sorts of horrible deeds for money. They actually had honour and loyalty, the kind that Akaguro couldn't find in most heroes.

Then he got himself a codename: Stain.

It had been almost three years since he started. He usually worked under Belphegor, which was somewhat more dangerous since the prince was insane but Stain wasn't in the position to complain.

He used his vacation days to pick off fake heroes back in Japan. It was easy, really. With the new skills he had picked up, he was better at stealth and combat than when he first started his purge. And being Varia had its perks too. He had access to information that normal information brokers wouldn't sell to a small time crook.

Life was normal. Killing heroes, ending villains, almost getting killed by Belphegor a few times...overall, Stain didn't have many complaints other than the fact that Japan was still infested by fakers claiming to be heroes.

However, recently one thing has been making his life hell.

The real boss of Varia (he was surprised when he realized there was someone else above Captain Squalo) had returned.

And Xanxus was the biggest fucking tyrant ever to exist on the face of this planet!

The first time Akugaro got assigned shadow duty, he hadn't known what would be so bad about it. He was Japanese and obviously didn't follow the Italian villain news closely. The officers gave him a mission, he did it unless it was something like killing a three years old toddler. His free time was spent in the training room or on flights back

and forth between Japan and Italy so he wasn't in the loop with all the gossip.

It wasn't like there was a rule book either. The Italian mafia had a strict hierarchy and much of the common knowledge was shared under the table, unspoken and on a need-to-know basis. So it really wasn't his fault that he hadn't heard about Xanxus's temper.

Within the first hour, Xanxus nailed him into the wall for bringing the wrong wine. If he had a nose, it might have hurt even worse. Throughout the day, he dodged plates and utensils, got smashed in the head by a candle stand, and almost got a boot to his stomach.

The worst part was that he *can't* fight back. Xanxus was boss so raising his weapons against him was considered treason. However, he could challenge the man to a duel but Stain took one look at the guy and knew that that wasn't a fight he wanted to start.

He wasn't going to win.

Xanxus was a rough looking young man with scars on his face. He didn't look like he had a gentle bone in his body and everything about him screamed power. He was an overwhelming force of nature, an inferno that could torch this earth until there was nothing left. This was Varia's king and an emperor of the night.

He was a villain from head to toe and from skin to bones.

Even Stain's crazy superior, Belphegor, acknowledged Xanxus as the leader.

But that didn't mean Stain was happy with it. Maybe one day he was going to kill Xanxus for the sake of his purge too. As time went on, he slowly came to accept the man as boss. Xanxus had impressive strength and intellect. The man also didn't give a rat's ass about gender, backgrounds, or anything else so long as they got the job done. He wasn't like the usual villains flaunting their power around either.

If his temper wasn't so bad, he just might be the perfect boss.

"Xanxus is *always* like this?" He didn't think he'd last another day on shadow duty.

"Yep." Windigo poured herself a cup of dark coffee as she sat down next to him during breakfast. She had been here longer than he had,

before Xanxus was briefly removed from being Varia's boss by the Ninth. "That's our boss's default mode for you."

Stain didn't last the week. He ended up in the medical wing feeling extra toasty on the sixth day. What did he do or say to piss Xanxus off? He had absolutely no idea. Might have just been conveniently at the wrong place at the wrong time.

When he felt good enough to walk, he signed himself up for a vacation and hopped on the fastest flight to Japan. He didn't want to be anywhere near Xanxus or the Varia loonies (wiat, he was also one of the crazies) for the next week or so.

Stain had made a name for himself in Japan by now too. The Hero Killer. It was lame and not as cool as the names some of the mafias had but Stain wasn't too hung up on it. As long as he got his message out, he was fine with whatever the media wanted to call him.

He was in the process of taking out Ingenium when his communicator beeped to life. Belphegor was on the other end and he was ordering him to go prepare a few things and meet up with someone.

Stain didn't want to argue with the prince's whims. He knew from experience how badly that would turn out so he left Ingenium with fewer wounds than he had first planned and went to carry out his superior's orders. On vacation or not, they were Varia and he'd be in a ton of shit if he didn't carry out a direct order.

Belphegor told him to go get some stuff in order and then meet with Victoire the next day.

"Who's that?"

"Boss's girlfriend. Mess with her and you might get to choose which one of us tortures you if she doesn't end you first."

She sounded charming. Stain wasn't looking forward to this meeting already. He had to snuck on a photoshoot set to meet her. It was easy even though they had security (these heroes the company hired sucked) and Stain found the girl in her dressing room.

Victoire was a teenage girl with blond hair and red eyes. She wore a tight fitting black dress with a loose white sweater over it. There was also an assortment of jewelry laid out on the table that she hadn't put on yet.

She wasn't spooked by him when he seemed to have morphed from the shadows.

Stain handed the stuff that Belphegor wanted him to get to her and in return, she passed him a small suitcase. They did the exchange in silence. He didn't question why the hell he was handing over a bag load of guns and pink daggers to a teenage model. There was also a teddy bear wearing a shirt that said "Kill them all next time :)". It was custom made and that was why Belphegor had sent Stain on a rush trip for it.

But he did briefly wonder why all these mafia men liked them younger. It just felt odd to him to be in a relationship with a minor even though Xanxus himself was still pretty young.

Not that he was ever going to judge his boss (one that would definitely put a bullet through his head) and his love life. If Xanxus and the girl are happy, who was he to say anything? He knew the girl wasn't in distress since she looked pleased to have received Belphegor's special delivery. There was also something innately off about her but Stain didn't give it too much thought. She was dating *Xanxus*. Of course there was something wrong with her in the head.

"Are you going to be in Japan for long?" she had asked him in Italian as she put on her earrings. Her dressing room smelled like roses. There were bouquets of the red flowers lined up against the wall, courtesy of her fans.

"Just a few more days."

"Alright, if you run into one of those hero students, make sure you don't kill them."

"I don't usually kill children." But that rule was lax. Depending on the situation, he would definitely nip a bad flower in its buds without blinking an eye.

"That's why this is an *order*. Absolutely no killing of minors while you're in Japan for your...hobby."

And Captain Squalo had said that her words were law. Sometimes it can even rank a higher priority than Xanxus's.

So Stain grunted an acknowledgement and left without further ado.

After that, he moved on to continue his vacation. The League of

Villains were...pathetic was the word that came to mind. The boss had no conviction and was just a madman who liked mindless destruction and violence. He was no sky. He wasn't a leader in any sense. Even Xanxus, who was spoiled and a goddamn moody dictator, was leagues above this Shigaraki guy in terms of charisma and how to run a noble crime organization. Yes, noble. Vongola was noble. They still had their fair share of dirty sins but at least they weren't like the heroes who just tried to sweep everything that didn't put them on a high horse under the rug.

But Stain could still find some sort of common ground with Shigarai, even if the man did made snarky comments about how Stain smelled girly. They both wanted to shake this society from its pitiful slumber in that fragile peace.

Then he somehow got himself arrested.

It had been a miscalculation on his part. His work got interrupted by three young heroes in training. He couldn't kill the one with the glasses even though that wasn't really fit to be a hero in his eyes due to the orders he got. Also, he didn't really have any intention of killing the other two. They were naive and their skills were amateurish but they did have a spark of what real heroes should be like.

And Shigaraki happened. The man only wanted destruction and he delivered it by sending monsters loose on the streets of Hosu. There were monsters, heroes, panicking crowds, and a lot of opportunists running wild across the whole city as fire and smoke raged.

He hadn't intended on getting arrested. Stain was sure he could have gotten out of there with no problem but that green haired kid just had to get snatched by one of the monsters. He knew he would get laughed at for this later but he saved that boy.

A week later, he escaped from the prison with the help of Varia's mist division. They were the ones who tried to make the castle kill him when he first got kidnapped. He didn't want to admit it but Belphegor *was* a genius. He saw through him and knew Stain would come to find Varia as kind of a home eventually. He fitted right in!

Mammon handed him a piece of paper with their banking information. "Three S-rank missions worth of pay. Remember to transfer the money into my account. If you can't pay, I have a list of missions for you. First stop: Afghanistan."

Sighing, Stain got up. It looked like he wouldn't be able to set foot in

Japan in the near future.

His grand plans of purging the society of rotten heroes would need to be placed on hold for a while because he knew that if he didn't pay Mammon back on time, *he* would be permanently put out of commission.

Chapter End Notes

Stain got recruited into Varia a few years before Xanxus was defrosted. He's probably the least psychotic in Varia.

Next one is outsider POV again.

Update: Please note that I have said it again and again: I do not know when I will update for any of my fics. I feel like working on this one, I do this one. I feel like doing another one, I do that one. I don't have a set writing schedule. Please stop asking when my fics will update.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Outsider POV: Giada is another OC.

And I threw in Squalo for fun

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

The thing with being rich that a lot of people tended to gloss over was that there was a lot of *unecessary* social interactions.

Giada Esposito did not enjoy parties. She was not born for the spotlight and she had very little interest in interacting with strangers. These parties were never what they seemed anyways and the water was so murky and deep that she didn't want to touch it with a ten feet pole. There were always schemes behind a friendly smile and judgement lining those sweet words making rounds around the room.

She didn't like these parties but her father had made her come. Giada was almost twenty and he planned to find her a suitable husband since her older brother was already taking over some of the family business.

So here she was, standing in the corner of the polished ballroom with huge chandelier lights. Diamond necklace and a floor length green dress, she had made sure to pick it to suit her darker skin tone. She knew that she wasn't too much to look at but the stylist had put a lot of effort into making her as beautiful as they could manage tonight. They had done her dark hair in curls and painted her face to bring out her eyes, which were her best features according to her mother.

The Esposito family was into the pharmaceutical business and they were doing fairly well. Still, her father would like her to marry up and move their family up the ladder by gaining...some stronger allies. In Italy, instead of heroes or government officials, they all knew it was the mafia who held the most power. Giada didn't see anything wrong with that. She had no interest in fighting or running a company, and she was more than happy to repeat her mother's life. Giving birth to a good heirs and enjoying the wealth her husband accumulated wasn't such a bad deal in her eyes.

It didn't matter that her potential husband would be mafia. She knew the risks and what sacrifices meant.

Thus, she took a scan around the room and tried to spot a proper suitor. The party was hosted by one of the more influential families who had an alliance with Vongola to celebrate the current boss's birthday. The man had hit 80, a pretty big milestone especially in a world as dangerous as theirs. He had two grandsons but they were both too old for Giada's liking. She would like someone younger, closer to her age.

The crowd was in small groups, closer allies and friends chatting with each other over champagne and light party snacks. There was some tension amongst the guests but those were hidden behind smiles and firm handshakes.

There were other girls here too, daughters or associates of mafia members and other wealthy business partners. She could tell they had the same goal as her. This was a good party where a lot of the bigger shots would show up, so there was a better batch of eligible candidates to try and go after. They were all dazzling with elegant dresses and expensive jewelry.

Giada heard some commotion at the entrance and saw the crowd bristling.

"It's Varia," someone whispered and the room tensed. It was as if the air had been infused with ice crystals and it was making it hard to breathe for everyone. Every inhale was accompanied by the phantom sensation that their lungs would bleed and every exhale felt like their last.

"That's Xanxus right? Haven't seen him in a while."

"Wasn't he detained by the Ninth for you know what?" Although Vongola had tried to keep things quiet, it was hard to hide something like a *coup*. Words and rumors still got around, shared through quiet whispers in the dark or behind the safety of reinforced walls. Xanxus had tried to kill his own father for the throne and Vongola Nono hadn't had the heart to execute his youngest child. "Heard he was on house arrest."

"Who's the girl with him?"

Giada turned around at that. She could see Varia coming in through the door and making their way towards the host to pay their greetings

(although they looked like they were here to crash the party more).

The girl in question was younger than her by a few years at least. Her hair was ash blond and it was kept short. She had fair porcelain skin and ruby eyes. Her dress was cherry red with a shimmering layer of butterfly pattern and she wore matching red heels with small red bows locked around her ankles. Around her neck sat an intricate piece of necklace made with gold and ruby that Giada was sure half of the female occupants in the room would be jealous of.

Quite a few of the men were ogling her, some with just curiosity while the others had...other intentions.

Giada knew her. She was a rising model with no mafia background. At least, none that people could find. Her name was Vicotire, just a regular girl and she somehow managed to catch the eyes of a *Vongola*. Now that Enrico and his brothers were dead, Xanxus was one of the only two candidates for Decimo left. While they had heard the news that Vongola's higher ups were favoring the other candidate nominated by the external advisor more, Xanxus wasn't someone whom they could just ignore easily.

Xanxus took large strides across the room with an arm around the girl's waist. He was an intimidating man with an oppressive presence. The air around him seemed to weigh a ton and no one had dared to walk up to greet him yet. Giada would admit that he was handsome in the very traditionally masculine way but he also looked terrifying. He towered over most of the crowd and judging from the tightness of his dark suit (by the way, the colour of his tie matched Victoire's dress), he also had strong muscles. There was no smile on his face as he handed over a birthday gift from the Ninth to the host. The old man was slightly quivering as he took the present and thanked Xanxus for coming.

Shaking her head, Giada casted her eyes away. There was no way she was going after Xanxus. He was hot but she didn't want to bet how tough she was. She was pretty sure that one punch from him could send her to the hospital for a good whole month. Giada liked handsome men and money but she cherished her own life the most. No need to test her luck especially when the man already got a date. In fact, she kind of pitied the girl. She didn't look Italian and she seemed quite petite and slim compared to Xanxus so Giada was scared that he might accidentally snap her neck or something by accident.

Xanxus was Varia's emperor, a dangerous weapon polished sharp and

deadly that would slain all of Vongola's enemies to the ground.

He was not a man that could be reined in by love.

But apparently not everyone was as smart as she was.

As Giada moved through the crowd, she could hear the jealous whispers floating around, sneers half shielded by fancy fans as the poisonous words fell from plumped lips.

"...A dirty foreigner."

"Nothing but a pretty face...he surely would get tired of her soon..."

Some people were also thinking about other things, like if they could prepare Xanxus a few *gifts* and get on the Varia boss's good side. If he was fine with that model, surely they could find another that would suit his tastes. Those from more prestigious families were also probably thinking about a political marriage if Xanxus would be interested in their daughters.

Even Giada's own father pulled her aside.

"Look at her," she hissed under her breath before he could open his mouth. "I'm not his type. Forget it."

She didn't think she could control Xanxus or make him fell madly in love with her so no, she wasn't going to risk her life for her father's stupid greed.

Her father looked disappointed but he didn't push it any further.

Giada saw Xanxus's right hand man, Superbi Squalo, standing beside the girl and Xanxus was nowhere to be seen. He was more Giada's type. The man had a headful of long, silky silver hair and he was also handsome. Dressed in a silver striped suit, his face had slightly softer edges than Xanxus's but that didn't make him look feminine either. He looked quite respectful towards the girl.

There were a few men in crispy suits who approached the silver haired man and he said something to her before leaving to discuss things with the men.

The girl was now alone.

Giada swirled the wine in her glass as she watched a few other younger women approach the model. She had no intention of

interfering.

The women and girls all had pretty smiles and their tone was drenched in honey. However, they made remarks that sounded kind and considerate on the surface but were harsh in reality. They insinuated that she wasn't fit to be here. She was out of place and out of her league.

"In the end he'd marry someone proper from a much more suitable family anyways," one of the girls standing a bit to the side was talking to her friend but she didn't lower her volume. "If I was her I'd have more shame and know when to give up."

Victoire only smiled at them and she seemed unfazed by all of it. Giada briefly wondered if she knew enough Italian to comprehend that she was being insulted.

"Is that all?" she chirped with a grin and it took everyone by surprise.

One of the women looked at her oddly. "...Do you understand what we just said?"

"Why, of course!" Victoire beamed at her and the woman's hand that she used to hold up a cup of wine trembled slightly. "But that isn't really something in my control, don't you think? I'll leave when Xanxus tells me to."

There was a suggestion behind her words. A *challenge*. She would only leave Xanxus's side when he told her to? What if he got married but still hasn't told her to leave? Sure, it wasn't uncommon for mafia men to have affairs but things like that were usually kept out of sight and as much as they fooled around outside, at the end of the day they would still return home and side with their wives. Mistresses don't usually flaunt themselves in front of the wives either because the wives usually came from more powerful families and could command her husband's staff.

It wasn't uncommon for the wives to make the lovers disappear either.

"Have you no shame?" The women's faces twisted slightly from the bold statement.

"All is fair in love and war." The blond girl simply nodded as if reaffirming her own words. "Besides, Xanxus isn't a man who could be bound by a simple ring and a piece of government issued paper. As long as he loves me, who's the real *pathetic* one in that situation?"

There was a coldness in her eyes that shined like gems. Her perfect smile suddenly looked ghostly too, like a painting done to hide something more sinister underneath. They all knew that if Xanxus cared more about his mistress then whatever his future wife thought was meaningless. His men would do the same too. They were a crazy bunch but they followed Xanxus's orders. If he favored the mistress then of course they would treat her as the real lady of the house. It was improper and not right but no one would dare to pipe up about it against *Xanxus*.

There was no benefit in being the wife in name only. No, when people like them get married, they want to be the lady of the house. They wanted to be in control of a portion of the family's wealth and power. And what would people think of them if they let a homewrecker trashed all over them? People would think they were spineless and worthless, a shamefully useless woman who can't even keep a man for a day! That would be utter humiliation.

"You—"

The women looked like they were completely taken aback and shocked. Some mutter about how Victoire had no class and was destined to be dumped but they immediately shut up and their face paled when they looked up. Xanxus was returning with Squalo just a few steps behind him.

"We're leaving, trash." He didn't seem to have noticed anything or maybe he just didn't care. Giada was leaning towards the latter. Xanxus didn't even acknowledge any of the women's presences even though a few of them were from families that have been on good terms with Vongola for generations.

Some of them probably studied in the same classes as he did when they were still teenagers. It wasn't compulsory but a lot of mafia send their children to this very specific private school so it was a good place to work on strengthening their connections amongst the families.

Victoire wrapped her arms around Xanxus's elbow and followed him out. She even smiled and said goodbye to the group of women paler than chalk in the sweetest pitch that Giada didn't think was humanly possible.

After they left, Giada felt conflicted. Normally she would find someone with Victoire's views as tactless and a scorn but somehow,

she felt like there was more to the blond model's story.

Those ruby eyes of hers had a predatory gleam that looked oddly similar to her boyfriend's.

But that was probably just her imagination.

"I hate parties," Katsuki announced loudly inside the limousine. He also took off the necklace and cranked his neck. The damn thing was heavy as fuck.

"And I second that opinion." Squalo loosened his tie as he checked his phone to make sure he hadn't missed anything important. "Pretty sure Boss is thinking the same thing. Nearly made one of the old bastards wet himself when he tried to act like a good uncle or something. At least Boss didn't punch anyone in the face this time, I call that improvement."

They were only here because of the Ninth.

Gods knew how much work Squalo had to put in just to convince Xanxus to put on a damn suit and come with them. The dark haired man never liked these social parties and it was thanks to his notorious reputation that people didn't dare to crowd around him.

"Shut up, you damn shark." There was no wine class for Xanxus to throw so he kicked his subordinate instead.

Squalo blocked it with his hand as he turned to Katsuki. "So, you really are keeping that bimbo-whose-only-concern-is-love act up in public too?"

"It works," Katsuki replied with a lopsided smile.

"Great, now people are going to think that's the type Xanxus is into. We're going to get dumbasses trying to get an audience with Boss so they can try sending more idiot blondes to climb his bed."

"Come on, we all expected it to happen anyways." Katsuki leaned his head on Xanxus's shoulder. The world was never going to be short of idiots getting "bright" ideas. Xanxus was the son of the most powerful Godfather of the underground society and he was 24, a prime age for marriage in many's eyes. Since his return, he was still Varia's boss and that power and wealth was enough to inspire people to have

some...unrealistic dreams.

Katsuki doesn't get jealous easily. The man was his and Kastuki was confident that none of the other extras would be as good or as hot as him.

Not all of them could survive Xanxus's temper either.

"This is going to be a pain in the ass for me." Squalo was the one who would have to waltz with the other mafia bosses and turn them down since Xanxus would prefer to just blast everybody who tried to pester him about this with his flames. That would cause diplomatic issues. "As the legit lover right now, should you be worried that Shitty Boss has a possibility of cheating on you?"

They both turned to Xanxus, who had shutted his eyes to rest.

Katsuki poked his boyfriend on the cheek and Xanxus gave him a disdained look. The blond pretended he didn't see that. "Are you going to cheat on me?"

"Dealing with your whiny bitchy ass alone is already too much work," Xanxus huffed before closing his eyes again.

Katsuki left a kiss on the corner of Xanxus's lips before turning towards Squalo. "See, nothing to worry about."

Idiotic couple. Squalo thought as he rolled his eyes. Well, so long as Xanxus wasn't shooting at him, he doesn't give two shits either. It wasn't like it was part of his job description to keep tabs on where Xanxus inserted his dick.

Besides, it takes a special brand of insanity and a certain set of skills to be able to date Xanxus. Otherwise, whoever the bride was will probably be dead within the first month of living inside Varia's base.

And so far, the only person Squalo had ever seen who met that criteria was one Bakugou Katsuki.

2

The first time Squalo met Katsuki, he didn't like the brat.

Hey, it couldn't be helped. He was a teenager hellbent on improving his sword skills and he was raised in the mafia world. His family was mafia and he went to a school that taught the *opposite* of what could

be considered good and heroic in this modern society. So of course he didn't get the memo about what was so great about kids. He would see old grannies on the streets, gushing at and praising some snot-nosed running bag of germs. He never got the appeal of what was so great about children. They were weak, frail, and *definitely* not "bundles of joy" with all that screaming and crying.

Xanxus didn't say much about where or how he had met Katsuki and Squalo didn't really pay much attention to the kid. As long as he didn't interfered with their work, he just saw the boy as one of Xanxus's odd whims. Like a kid taking a stray puppy home and eventually he will get bored with it.

If they could count teaching a toddler how to shoot or how to stab someone properly as playing then yes, Xanxus sort of played with the kid. Sometimes Squalo would think that the way the brat was holding a sword or dagger was pathetic so he'd give a few pointers. Or he'd go fetch a bag of candies from the store when Xanxus ordered him to but that was about the extent of his interaction with the blond.

The only thing about Katsuki's existence then was just to prove that contrary to popular belief, Xanxus *does* have some sort of a consciousness. He rarely fired at the boy and even when he did, it was always aimed further away than close on target like he did with the Varia members.

Then their coup failed. Xanxus got sealed off in a big chunk of fucking ice and Varia was now under indefinate suspension. Squalo knew this was coming. He knew what they did was considered treason and he was fully prepared to face the consequences. Execution. Torture. Anything. They were mafia and in their lawless world, only the strong prevailed. The losers were at the mercy of the winners and that was just how things worked.

But things were never so simple. Within Vongola, there was a lot of disagreement about what to do with them. They were skilled killers and Vongola would be squandering good talent if they just killed them all off. It wouldn't be wise to get rid of Varia at an unstable time like that. If other mafia families or the heroes and villains knew about it, they'd jump at the first chance to challenge Vongola's power once the strongest squad had been dismantled.

Some elders wanted them to be individually reassigned to other departments. Split them apart so it was easier to persuade them into swearing their loyalty to someone else. Some higher ups wanted a new

boss to be assigned. It wasn't hard to tell that either they wanted the position themselves or to give it to someone close to them. It was a struggle of power over who would get to command a group of elites.

Squalo did everything he could to keep Varia together. He was Xanxus's right hand and he had no doubt that idiot boss of his would make a comeback. He just needed to keep this dumpster fire of a group of psychos together until Xanxus came back. Varia was Xanxus's and Squalo had no intention of kneeling in front of someone else.

During that time, Mammon got a pet project. Since Varia wasn't getting as many missions as they used to, the mist guardian had to get creative with new ways to make money. Squalo doesn't know what deal they made with Katsuki but the child model Victoire was born.

Katsuki still popped by Varia's castle from time to time. It was a castle for assassins, of course they had secret passages and hidden rooms.

"Just let him stay here for a bit. I'll be back in two hours or so." Mammon had dropped the kid in Squalo's office one afternoon and vanished before the swordsman could open his mouth.

Looking down, Squalo had absolutely no idea what he was supposed to do with the brat. It wasn't like he had gotten a crash course in Babysitting 101 either. Katsuki was wearing shorts and a blue hoodie.

There was also a very familiar silver tiara on his head.

"...Isn't that Bel's?"

"It's mine now." The blond eight years old puffed out his chest as he glared at Squalo. "I punched him in the face and took this. That's what he gets since he keeps calling me 'Princess'."

Impressive. Bel might be just a year older than Katsuki but he wasn't called a genius for nothing. The prince had murdered a whole castle worth of people, his family included, and ran away before he joined Varia willingly out of boredom. His battle instincts were good enough that he could take on Varia missions so it was impressive that Katsuki managed to land a punch on him.

Squalo patted the kid on the shoulder in approval before sitting back down at his desk. While they didn't have as much *actual* work, someone still had to make sure the daily operations could still run smoothly. Electricity and hydro bills, maintenance of the gardens and training fields...there were all sorts of things to keep tabs on. Squalo

knew that he couldn't count on his fellow guardians to do this. Bel was too young and had a attention span of a goldfish, Lussuria was more interested in other things than stare at numbers all day, Levi could do some work but he was busy training the lower ranked Varia members so they wouldn't slack off, and Mammon was a ghost most of the time.

Squalo also wouldn't trust the baby illusionist with money. They might just launder everything into their own pockets or cut out "unnecessary expenses" because they were cheap like that. So he was stuck doing this himself.

Katsuki peered at the papers curiously.

"It's the budget list for one of the squads," Squalo said as he pushed the boy away from the desk and threw a folder into his arms. "Here, why don't you work out the numbers on this thing? Make yourself useful, Princess."

Squalo had used that term as an insult and he knew it worked because the blond glowered at him. Well, it was more like a pout in Squalo's eyes but hey, the boy was trying his best. The folder he had thrown at Katsuki wasn't anything urgent or important so it didn't matter if the kid messed up or not. If anything, Squalo expected him to start drawing skulls and stupid stickman like Bel would within the first ten minutes.

"Fuck you, trash."

Oh, that was definitely Xanxus's influence at work. He also knew where the kid had gotten an arsenal of Italian swear words in his dictionary now.

"If I'm trash then what does that make Xanxus?"

Katsuki's red eyes glossed over him as he opened the folder. "He's king of the landfill."

Squalo barked out a laugh. He was kind of getting why Xanxus kept this shitty brat around now.

The teen got some work down afterwards. Almost an hour had passed and Mammon wasn't back yet. That was when the question hit Squalo.

"Wait, wouldn't your parents be looking for you?" He doesn't know if Xanxus had prior arrangements with the boy's parents but judging

from the way Mammon acted whenever Katsuki came up in a conversation, he was starting to suspect the blond's parents had no idea what their son was doing.

The boy looked up from his spot on the couch. "Doubt it. They're going to be at a fashion show all day and there's a party for it right afterwards. They left me in the hotel room and told me to order room service if I'm hungry."

Breathing in, Squalo didn't know if he was in a position to point out exactly what was wrong with that statement. This was a kid. In a foreign country. Whose spoken Italian sucked by the way. And his parents thought it was fine to just leave him in a hotel alone for the whole day?

Squalo knew that mafia definitely didn't deserve parents of the year awards and they also often left their children to take care of work, or even throw their kid into the lion's den. But they usually leave the children with a nanny or butler. At the very least, there would be someone keeping tabs from afar. Even Bel, if he had to go on missions to another damn *country*, there was always an adult Varia member with him.

Neglectful parents. Not the worst Squalo had seen but at least it explained why no one had made any complaints or told the kid that he shouldn't be hanging out with assassins. From the sounds of it, Katsuki was used to being left alone too.

Squalo himself had a pretty cold upbringing. It was always nannies and tutors. His parents then sent him off to a prestigious school for mafia kids and that was where he met Xanxus. He spent a good part of his teenage years challenging swordsmen around the world too so he couldn't exactly tell if the Bakugous were asshole parents.

In the end he decided not to comment on it.

"Here, these are done."

The silver haired young man took a quick look through the boy's work and he was surprised to find that the quality was better than what some of the idiots his subordinates submitted in the past. Curious, Squalo slid another stack of papers to the boy and watched him work.

Katsuki wrote in very simple Italian. There was no overly extravagant use of adjectives or long sentences that look like a headache to decipher. The handwriting was neat and the numbers worked out

well.

It wasn't like they needed to be writing prose or Shakespear on their reports. In fact, the simpler the better!

Squalo started throwing small amounts of work at the boy whenever he could afterwards. A report here and an excel sheet there. Over time, he figured out the kid was like a sponge that just absorbed knowledge. Whatever he threw at him, the boy could catch. Katsuki said he wanted to be the best of the best, to be the greatest hero in the world so that he wasn't going to get defeated by a few boring paperwork.

His Italian had gotten better. Squalo would like to think that was thanks to him even though all he did was talk to the kid in Italian all the time instead of switching to Japanese.

Squalo wanted to see how far this kid could go. So far, the kid hadn't fit what Squalo's stereotype of kids should be. Katsuki could be quiet and he didn't cry when he fell. He would climb back up on his own and he didn't expect to be pampered like all those spoiled brats out there.

He customized a training plan when Katsuki and Belphegor made a bet that Katsuki couldn't last a week with Varia's training. That motivation to become a hero must have been really strong cause the kid stuck with it. Got better at playing with knives from his fights with Belphegor too. He also picked up Muay Thai from Lussuria and surprisingly got along pretty well with Levi. Maybe it was because both of them had absolute faith in Xanxus.

Squalo was starting to like the kid.

Perhaps this was what it felt like to have a younger sibling, one that Squalo *didn't* want to kill. Belphegor doesn't count. The prince was a hellspawn and too far gone already that he wasn't cute at all. Sometimes Squalo wasn't sure if Katsuki should count as a younger brother or a little sister either. Maybe both.

Victoire looked like a life sized doll. The kind that walked out of fantasies filled with rainbow coloured unicorns and she was the princess straight from every little girl's dreams. Squalo decided that Mammon must know witchcraft or it wouldn't be able to explain how they turned the feral kid who sparred with Belphegor with real daggers into an angel in front of the cameras.

Katsuki was twelve when Squalo visited Japan. He had some free time to kill before he had to return to Italy so he went to check on the blond. The kid's parents left about half an hour ago so it was just Katsuki in the house. The blonde let him in and told him to disregard the shards of glass on the ground, which he was in the middle of cleaning before Squalo came knocking.

When Squalo asked what happened, Katsuki complained that his mom was being more of a bitch than usual lately because of some stress from work.

Squalo helped himself to the bathroom for a shower.

When he came out, he saw a tuft of fur tucked under Katsuki's pillow. Colourful feathers and beads accompanied it too. The swordsman stopped dead in his tracks as his eyes landed on the thing. Of course he knew what it was. He gave it to the kid himself.

It used to belong to Xanxus.

"It's been almost five years," he said when he felt the boy come in behind him. There was a complicated mix of layered emotion in his words that he wasn't going to analyze but he would say that confusion was the main feature.

Xanxus was his boss. If the boss wanted to light the world on fire, he would dump a gallon of gasoline on it. That was how the mafia loyalty worked. Squalo followed Xanxus because he thought the man deserved it. Xanxus had his faults and there was no arguing that his regime was dictatorial but this was the guy Squalo would willingly give his life for. He had earned that respect from him, from the other Varia members. Even if Xanxus was frozen in a block of ice right now, Squalo's loyalty couldn't be swayed.

Katsuki wasn't part of the mafia. He wasn't obliged to stay loyal to Xanxus and the kid wasn't dumb enough to not figure out that hanging out with them was a bad idea.

But he stayed.

Katsuki had no reason to stay. No reason to wait for a king who no one knew when he would return.

The blond only shrugged as he handed Squalo a cup of hot tea. There was a cut that ran down his right cheek, which Squalo assumed came from a ring. He used to have this literature teacher who liked to

backhand the kids when they screwed up, and the one thing he still remembered from her class was that diamond rings cut like a bitch. Katsuki's scar was shallow but the skin around it was a swollen red. Mammon wasn't going to like how their product got damaged.

Katsuki started to bandage himself up. "He's going to be back eventually. Remind me to pie him in the face for taking so damn long when he finally wakes up."

"...What if he doesn't come back?"

"He will," Katsuki said in a stern tone as he shoved the medical kit away and picked up the feather and beads on his bed. "You know he will and he's going to be Vongola Decimo."

He sounded so sure, so confident about it like it was a fact written in stones. And it was irritating to no end. Squalo remembered what he found out recently and his fists balled at his sides.

"You don't know any—"

"He's not the Boss's biological son."

Within the split of a second, Squalo had a glistening sword pressed against the side of Katsuki's neck. His demeanor also changed. There wasn't a single muscle in his body that wasn't tensed as he met those scarlet eyes with his own steel silver.

"How the fuck would *you* have known that?" he growled. No one should know that besides the Ninth, Xanxus, and himself. They were the only ones there when Xanxus was sealed off by the Ninth. Unless…unless Katsuki was *on* the Ninth's side.

They've known for a while now. There was a traitor amongst their ranks. Someone tipped off Vongola Nono about their plans five years ago. The upper echelons of Varia and this brat in front of him were the only ones who knew about it.

It was suspicious. Had Vongola Nono planted a young spy beside his adoptive son? But they were mafia and Squalo had long learned that he shouldn't underestimate anyone. Women, children, elderly… *everybody* was fair game in their world.

If Katsuki really was planted beside Xanxus by the Ninth, Squalo was going to cut this boy's head off right here and right now.

“Before Xanxus left, he said he was going to take back what was rightfully his.” Katsuki stayed calm even with the edge of the blade hovering dangerously close to his carotid arteries. “Why would he need to say that? Over half of the family would kneel before him willingly. He’s the Ninth’s son. He’s proved himself more than capable of dominating the empire by running Varia so well. Why would he feel threatened that his succession was at risk? Blood and honour. Vongola is traditional when it comes to these things, right? And Xanxus...he was *extra* grumpy the months leading up to the coup. Didn’t talk about his old man as often either. Like, he was *really* mad at him.”

His grip around the fur and feathers tightened as the blade pressed closer against his skin but he didn’t look away.

“The Ninth took him from the slums and his mom had mental issues. It’s not that hard to piece two and two together: The truth is they’re not related by blood.”

Squalo stared at him for a long silent minute before removing the sword from his neck. He sat down next to the kid in exasperation and flicked him on the forehead. “You’re too smart for your own good. Gonna get yourself killed for it one day. What if I didn’t know that information?”

Maybe he shouldn't have been letting the kid read all the Varia documents or let him stayed inside the library on their base either. Stupid brat probably had been reading too much for his own good.

“I don’t just blabber out secrets to anybody. You’re his right hand man so you’re safe.”

Kid was too observant and trusting for Squalo’s liking. He doesn't even know why Katsuki trusted Xanxus like this. Squalo himself had decided to follow Xanxus because he was strong and there was a magnificent fire burning in those red eyes. Xanxus was a force to be reckoned with and a natural emperor, there was no else more fitting to lead in Squalo's opinion. But Katsuki wasn't even mafia. Why the boy would be so devoted was just a mystery.

Squalo suspected it had something to do with Katsuki's home life.

Running a hand through his long silver hair, he decided that he was going to go hack a few things (or maybe people) later.

“By Vongola’s rules, he can’t inherit. What makes you so sure he can still succeed? The Ninth is never going to appoint him as the heir.”

The blond looked down at the hair accessory in his hands.

“Then kill them all,” his voice was quiet, almost like a ghostly whisper from far away. “Pureblood or bastard, so long as he’s the only one left then he’s the only choice they’ve got.”

Squalo chuckled at the seriousness and the dark violence those words promised. “Is that really something someone who wants to be a hero should be saying?”

“I’m not a hero yet,” Katsuki answered easily. “The other candidates suck and Xanxus’s the best out of them. If he was running the show, at least there is someone to keep the darkness in check. He’s violent and abusive, not stupid and unfit to rule.”

“What happens if he goes too far?” The peace between heroes and the mafia was a delicate thing after all. And Squalo can’t imagine Xanxus being as kind to the law enforcers as his old man on the negotiation table.

“I’ll arrest his ass.”

This time the silver haired swordsman actually bursted out laughing. His laughter resonated within the generic bedroom that was neat but didn’t contain a lot of personal objects. Squalo knew there was another place where Mammon and Katsuki stashed the Victoire stuff. The kid was mature for his age for a reason.

“You’re one fucking weird psychotic brat,” said Squalo.

Katsuki scowled at him. “And you’re one loud motherfucking shithead.”

Squalo had a change of plans. He wasn’t going to kill Katsuki. No, he was going to *train* him. Varia was missing a cloud and he was sure that shitty Boss wouldn’t mind if he woke up to find that Squalo had found someone to fill those shoes. Hero or not, it wouldn’t be Varia’s style if they just gave up. They were mafia and assassins. They have no regard for the law and they would take what they wanted through any means. It would be good if Varia had someone who could work on Japanese soil more freely too. Most of the world’s underground trades heeded Vongola’s orders but Japan had always been more off limits to them foreigners, all thanks to some guy named All For One who hadn’t been making much of a splash in the recent years because of All Might’s rise.

Even though Katsuki was too young, Squalo knew he'd be a good fit. The boy had a surprising knack for sensing danger and sniffing out schemes plotted against them. His physical abilities were stellar and he had a strong quirk. He was loyal to Xanxus to boot.

He would make a fine cloud.

As time went by, Katsuki didn't disappoint. He was killing it as the model Victoire and raked in large sums of money for Mammon. He got stronger as he immersed himself in learning about all sorts of weapons and firearms. And the paperwork he handed in was flawless. Squalo also knew that Katsuki was doing some of Bel and Lussuria's paperwork too but he let it slide.

Damn kid was more useful and less trouble to deal with than most of his colleagues.

That was the first time when Squalo internally applauded Xanxus's decision of keeping the brat. Were they finally going to get someone competent, sane, and *normal* amongst their ranks? It was like Christmas came early!

At the same time, Squalo decided that if anything or anyone tried to hurt the kid, they were going to have to answer to his sword first.

Shitty Boss and the other assholes who don't do their own paperwork included.

Chapter End Notes

> Victoire is totally the white lotus bitch. If Katsuki's not happy and has to suffer, none of these extras get to be happy either in his opinion.
>
> Not sure what I want to do with Midoriya for this one. Been reading fics for both sides (Midoriya centric vs Bakugou centric) to see if I'd get inspired but so far nothing.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

Implied/referenced MPREG

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Ashido Mina didn't consider herself a fashion expert but she did enjoy flipping through magazines filled with the latest fashion trends. It was fun to imagine herself wearing the fancy dresses or overly pricey jewelry. But she usually checks out the ones whose stuff were more within her budget range too. The clothing on these ones were more casual and easier to move in.

"What are you reading, Mina?" Tsuyu peeked over Mina's shoulder. Her pink haired friend had been quieter than usual during break so Tsuyu thought she would ask.

Mina turned around and showed her the magazine in her hand. "It's the latest from Teen Vogue! They've got the new line of summer wear out already!"

Tsuyu was a bit confused. She wasn't that into keeping up with the fashion trends. Besides school and training, she also had to take care of her younger siblings so that didn't leave her with much free time for shopping. Taking a quick look, she saw a girl with ash blond hair wearing thin gold rimmed glasses with stars draping down from the edges on the cover. She had soft cheeks and porcelain skin. Her lips were also adored with a glossy orange lip gloss as she gazed tantalizingly at the camera.

She looked like a movie star from the silver screen.

"Oh, isn't that Victoire?" Jirou came over and she looked excited too. "I subscribed to the digital copy. If you haven't seen it yet, check out the third selection. She is rocking those boots!"

They flipped the pages and saw the model in a tight black dress that came down to around the middle section of her thighs. She was also wearing knee high leather boots that had a lot of stapes and silver chains on them.

“She’s so pretty!” Mina gushed over the image of the blond model and the other two girls nodded in agreement.

Their excitement drew attention from the others in class and more people started to gather around them.

“Oh, it’s Victoire.” Hagakure seemed to be familiar with this model as well. “Have you guys heard about the new line of watches she’s collabing with? I stayed up late to try and order one but they were all gone so fast!”

“It’s the ones with the stars inside them right?” Mina set the magazine down and perked up at the mention of the watches. “They are kind of out of my price range but I really want one too.”

Hagakure placed a hand on her classmate’s shoulder sympathetically. “I had been saving for it ever since they announced it was coming out last fall.”

The group went on flipping through the magazine and talking about the clothing and the models in there.

Iida wasn’t sure what all of the fuss was about so he voiced his question out loud and the majority of the class, including a few of the guys, turned to look at him as if he suddenly grew a second head.

“You don’t know who Victoire is?” Hagakure, who was standing closest to him, shrieked in disbelief.

Surprised by the huge reaction, Iida backed away a bit. “...No I don’t?”

“She’s only like, the BIGGEST teen international model out there right now!” shouted Mina as she got up and shoved the magazine in front of their class representative’s face. “She’s our age and she’s already more famous and popular than some of the first 100 heroes. She’s been in the modeling business since she was just a kid and she looks totally killer in all sorts of styles of clothing. That’s why all the big brands love her.”

“She mostly does high end products overseas but she also does some charity and more casual brands. There’s also her own line of clothing that’s really affordable,” Uraraka added from beside Iida. “My parents got me one of her kimono dresses when I graduated middle school. Half of the girls in my graduating class got something similar too.”

“She’s that famous?” Iida didn’t know this blonde girl was so well known amongst his peers. He turned to the other guys in class and saw quite a few of them blushing oddly.

“Um, come on man, you can’t honestly have not heard about her before?” Kaminari faked a cough as he patted Iida on the back. “Her face is on so many billboards and commercials! *And* she’s smoking hot. What kind of guy wouldn’t be interested? If you haven’t heard about her before, raise your hand.”

He yelled the last sentence at the class and only Todoroki raised his hand, which was kind of expected. The rest of the guys all had a varying degree of sheepishness on their faces. Koda was basically hiding his red face behind his hands too.

“She is very cute,” Sero had a fond look on his face. “She’s really sparkling on the catwalks. I heard that people who have met her in person said it looked like there were flowers floating in her background when she walked by.”

“Flowers...is that her quirk? Or is it just special stage effects?” Of course Midoriya would be more interested in the quirk aspect of things. He went on to mutter about if the flowers were more illusionary or if they were real.

“Don’t know, she hadn’t disclosed her quirk to the public.”

A lot of celebrities kept their quirks private because it would be easier to track them down if they had a special quirk.

“Sparkly…?” Todoroki had somehow moved closer and was studying the magazine as if he was trying to solve a university level math problem. “Hey, doesn’t she kind of resemble Bakugou?”

“Eh?”

“Huh?”

“What?”

A variety of surprised noises sounded from around the room and everyone turned to look at him. Even Bakugou, who had his headphones in (everyone could tell he wasn’t interested in these topics), whipped his head around.

“What the fuck did you say, Half-and-Half?” he barked with an

annoyed scowl.

Everyone in class tensed a bit. Bakugou had been...scary ever since the start of the school year. He was loud and brash. Strutted around with a sort of slouch like a delinquent and he liked to refer to everyone by some form of a nickname instead of addressing them properly. Besides the very colourful vocabulary, there also seemed to be a permanent scowl burnt into his features and he wasn't much of a people's person either.

Despite his demeanor and appearance, he was one of the top students in both academics and in training. They can't say they weren't impressed with how he won against so many of them in the sports festival without relying too much on his quirk though. Bakugou's fighting instinct was unmatched. Even Todoroki had admitted defeat in front of the blond when they resumed classes and even asked for pointers about where Bakugou had gotten so good at combat.

Kirishima and Midoriya had vouched that Bakugou wasn't really an impulsively violent person but quite a few of their classmates were still a bit cautious around him.

"I said you and her look alike," Todoroki repeated as he pointed to the model on the cover. "The same hair colour and eye colour too."

"Don't insult Vicky!" Before anyone could react, Mineta jumped up onto his chair and waved frantically. "There's no way an angel like her looks like Bakugou! Look at her! Her smile is so beautiful and gentle! And if you look at her interviews, she doesn't call anyone anything insulting or use bad words like Bakugou does. And while her boobs are a little bit small, she's got a tiny waist and a butt so round that you just want to put your hands around her—OOF!"

He didn't get to finish that sentence as a force slammed into him and his whole body flew off the chair before pancaking onto the ground.

"Who kicked me?" he yelled out in pain as he wiped a hand over his nose that was starting to show a little bit of swollen red.

"My foot slipped," Bakugou huffed dangerously as he narrowed his eyes at the shorter boy. "Got a problem with it, punk?"

Mineta immediately shook his head and scampered off back to his desk in silence. None of the other classmates thought too much of it. In fact, they would even applaud Bakugou this time since Mineta was definitely thinking about something dirty.

“Mineta might not be too wrong. I mean, Victoire is so different from Bakugou. I remember guys at my middle school used to imagine her as their girlfriend,” Sero said with a laugh. “Pretty sure there’s a lot of dudes out there crushing on her.”

“But she’s dating someone, isn’t she?” Kirishima looked up from his phone. He hadn’t been all that invested in the topic either. While he did know about the model, he wasn’t into all the lace and ribbons or the glamour. Victoire looked like the kind of girl that was out of his league and would be super high maintenance too. “Some Italian guy according to the news.”

The pictures weren’t very clear but he could kind of make out the blurry outline of a larger man with the model.

“Ah! Don’t remind me that she’s taken already!” Kiminari complained loudly and as dramatically as he could. The blond teen dropped himself on Kirishima in an effort to get revenge. “That’s one lucky dude! I’m so jealous!”

Bakugou made a sound that sounded like a mix between stifling down an insult and cackling. But when Kirishima turned around, the blond looked away as if nothing had happened. But odd enough, Kirishima thought that Bakugou looked like he was in a slightly better mood.

The redhead looked down and he saw a familiar keychain. On Bakugou’s bag, there was a keychain from one of Victoire’s advertisements and Kirishima grinned as he nudged Mina silently. The girl saw what he was looking at and she also giggled.

Who knew Bakugou would be a Victoire fan too?

2

Katsuki was starting to regret agreeing to be Sawada Tsunayoshi’s tutor. He knew he would be dealing with idiots and Reborn’s training would be hell but he *didn’t* sign up for a duel to the death with some tonfas wielding weirdo!

It was just a normal weekend where he had decided to drag Sawada out of the house and worked on some practical Italian as they took a short walk. He had realized that Sawada wasn’t too much of a book person. There was no way he would remember anything no matter how long he forced him to stare at a book. The guy learned better when he was actually using what he was supposed to learn in one way or another. Also, the Sawada house was infested with loud and noisy

children and that chaos wasn't a good environment to study in at all.

In a way, Katsuki kind of felt like he was teaching a dog as he sprayed Sawada with water and repeated the noun "Acqua". Sawada wasn't a bad guy. He was just slow. Xanxus hadn't given him much detail about it but judging by what Reborn told him, Vongola Ninth tempered with Sawada's flames when he was younger. Sawada had been a regular kid before he got sealed.

It was necessary.

It was a mistake.

Katsuki was now certain Vongola Ninth had absolutely no fucking clue what the hell he was doing and really was an "old retard" like Xanxus said. Wasn't flames some kind of life energy? And the guy sealed Sawada off from it...so technically he could have almost killed him *on top* of making him dumber than he already was? And Sawada's dad agreed to it.

These mafia adults seriously messed up.

Not that he can't say his own parents weren't fucked ups.

Anyways, since they were on their walk, that was how Katsuki ran into this Hibari guy. The black haired teen was aloof and cold but he had nodded slightly at Sawada when he greeted him in a stutter. Hibari was Sawada's senpai and apparently he was the crownless king of Namimori. The guy wasn't just head of the disciplinary committee at their school, he also terrorized all the local gangs and villains into submission. It can even be said that Namimori was this peaceful thanks to him. There was barely any hero presence here in this small town because the crime rates were so low. They can't really arrest Hibari either since his family had an influence over the town and Hibari hadn't used his quirk in public.

He just beat people up with his tonfas.

Honestly, Katsuki only paid attention to him because Hibari was also Sawada's cloud guardian. If Xanxus didn't need to put on the show, Katsuki might have needed to fight Hibari during the ring battle.

The blond was expecting some goody two shoe and uptight entitled asshole (like that class rep of his) with the whole disciplinary committee theme but reality liked to fuck with him. Hibari didn't look like a nerd or Iida. He had short black hair and he wore a simple black

and white school uniform with a red band around his arm, which had the writing “discipline” on it. He had a pretty nice face, one that was closer to the traditional Asian standards of what a gentleman should look like, someone who was suited with fine ink and jade.

But Hibari’s personality was the furthest thing from peaceful.

The guy had taken one glance at Katsuki and mused, “You’re a carnivore.”

That was how they ended up fighting in a park. Katsuki jumped back and flipped himself over on his hand as another strike came down. The end of the metal tonfas hit the ground and a painfully heavy sound came from the ground. He didn’t even need to think to know another kick would swipe his way so he countered it with a kick of his own.

“You’re not fighting seriously,” Hibari stated as he pulled back. His grey eyes fixated onto Katsuki as the blond spun the long needle like blade in his hand. He was enjoying this. This was a guy who lived to fight.

Katsuki shifted his stance and glared at the guy who attacked him. “No quirk usage allowed in public areas. Cops are going to come running at the sounds of motherfucking *explosions.*”

“They won’t,” Hibari answered in all his confidence as he attacked again. Bakugou kicked him back but that didn’t stop him for long. There was even a new gleam of excitement in his eyes. “Kusakabe.”

“Yes, Sir. The cops have been notified to stay clear of the park for now!” the teen with hair styled like one of those delinquents from the old times standing on the sidelines yelled. Katsuki briefly wondered how long does it take for him to style his hair into an airplane like that. Also, what the fuck? Why were cops listening to the command of some middle schooler?

Katsuki had figured out by now that Hibari wasn’t anything like Iida. The guy does whatever was needed to get what he wanted and what he wanted the most were satisfying fights. He also had a thing against crowding...and three was a crowd that needed to be broken up in his eyes. So in short, this dude was a maniac too.

Reborn seriously knew how to choose lunatics, didn't he?

But Katsuki kind of enjoyed it too. Fighting Hibari wasn’t so bad. He

was good at martial arts and they were evenly matched since Katsuki can't aim to kill or explode him. Hibari also wasn't fully serious yet. They exchanged blows and the sound of metal scratching against metal filled the air. He could see small sparks flying off when his weapon came in contact with the tonfas and the sound of battle got his blood pumping.

"Well, aren't you going to get serious?" Hibari asked just as he delivered a strike down Katsuki's side and the blond blocked it with his elbow.

"Still fuck no," Katsuki spat while shaking the numbness off. "My school happens to be a bitch with these things. Can't get my ass expelled when I'm trying to be a hero."

"A hero?" that seemed to have surprised Hibari. He scanned Katsuki from head to toe and the blond caught a trace of disbelief on that expressionless face.

That pissed him off a little bit. Katsuki threw his weapon at Hibari and gave him the finger when the guy tilted his head to the side and avoided getting impaled by it.

"Y-Yes! Hibari-senpai, please stop attacking Bakugou-kun!" Tsuna jumped in and pleaded. "It will hurt his hero career if he is caught using his quirk in public or fighting students from another school!"

"Then we just have to not get caught," Hibari stated calmly. "There's an abandoned warehouse two blocks down and there's the mountains, no one goes up there. Your choice."

"Do you want to start a forest fire or a factory fire?" Katsuki scoffed as he tucked his weapon away then grabbed the back of Sawada's shirt to pull him closer. As much as he loved a good battle, he knew what his priorities were. "I'm not here to fight you either. I'm here to teach this idiot Italian. I ain't got time for you."

Hibari wasn't pleased with that answer. His attention landed on Sawada and Katsuki could feel the brown haired teen shuddering in fear.

"Come on, Hibari-senpai. That's Bakugou's school rule so please stop fighting him. We don't want *heroes* getting involved!" Sawada looked like he wanted to bolt but he still stayed planted to the ground. That part of him was annoyingly similar to Deku but at least this kid knew when to put his money where his mouth was at the right times or

when it was the appropriate time to find his spine.

Whatever Sawada had said must have triggered something in Hibari because although he looked unhappy, he stopped. This was surprising since Hibari had struck Katsuki as someone who wouldn't care about such things but the dark haired teenager glanced at Reborn before putting his tonfas away.

"Tenth!"

Katsuki and Hibari both sighed at the same time when they heard the new voice calling for Sawada. They looked at each other but then both turned their heads away. It was obvious they both didn't like crowds. Katsuki never liked to be surrounded by a group of extras and he often found people annoying. They were hard to deal with too. Too complicated. Like puzzles with no solutions.

The kids mainly cried and screamed. The teens were always fearful or envious of him. The adults always wanted something from him or they were judgemental. So yeah, he didn't like crowds at all. Crowds were only mildly more tolerable when he was Victoire. They all loved *her* plus she got paid big bucks to put up with them.

"Gokudera-kun and Yamamoto-kun!" Sawada waved at his friends who were running towards them. He also tried to move closer to them but Katsuki was quicker and grabbed him again.

"Get your ass back here, Sawada! We aren't done with class yet! You have to at least master ten more words before you go."

"Don't yell at the Tenth!" Gokudera shoved Katsuki back. He was a half Italian teen with short silver hair and emerald eyes. The guy was Sawada's storm guardian and his goal was to become Vongola Decimo's right hand. Sometimes Katsuki thought that Gokudera would get along with Tokoyami. Both of them liked punk jewelry that consisted of a lot of skulls.

"Don't tell me what to do, Octopus Head!" The hair behind Gokudera's neck was a bit messy and they spiked out like the octopus sausages in bentos.

"What did you call me? I don't know where Reborn found you but I won't let you disrespect the Tenth!" Gokudera was pulling out bombs now. Katsuki thought his quirk might have something to do with making bombs since he had no idea how the guy could just keep pulling those dynamites out of his pockets. Or maybe it was another

one of those mafia mysteries, like where the fuck does Belphegor kept all his daggers.

“Gokudera-kun, please stop!” Sawada tugged on Gokudera’s arms to stop him from lighting the fuse on the bombs. His friends don’t know Katsuki was Victoire yet so they just thought Katsuki was another outside tutor Reborn got. If Gokudera found out about Katsuki’s association with Varia...things wouldn’t be good. He would definitely be against hanging out with the “enemy”.

“Lambo-sama is coming through!” They all heard footsteps rushing their way and Katsuki saw a...cow? No, it was a kid in a cow onesie running towards them while carrying what looked like a caterpillar on a stick. “Tsuna! Look what I found!”

The kid couldn’t be older than five and he had an Afro. He also wasn’t watching where he was going and was charging *right off a flight of fucking stairs.* Missing a step, he didn’t seem to have realized he wasn’t stepping on solid ground anymore and he fell, bouncing off the stairs before flying into the air.

Something pink flew out of his bush of hair.

“LAMBOOOO!!!”

Tsuna’s horrified and worried screaming was cut short as a cloud of pink fog shielded Katsuki’s vision. His body tensed as he anticipated danger but when he opened his eyes again, Katsuki realized that he was sitting on the ground of a very familiar bedroom. Xanxus's room to be exact.

Did I teleport? He wasn’t sure what hit him. Maybe it was a quirk like that Wrap Gate who attacked them during the USJ incident? Katsuki did a quick check of himself to make sure he wasn’t missing anything before he could spare any attention to study his surroundings.

It was definitely Xanxus’s room but there were a few things out of place. While the room still retained the expensive and fancy interior decorations, the furniture had been moved slightly and there were things that obviously didn’t belong to Xanxus. For instance, there was a new wooden vanity set in the corner. He saw a variety of makeup in the drawers and there was also some jewelry laid out. Around him, there were also some boxes of heels scattered around and a teddy bear. A *toy teddy bear*!

There was no way Xanxus would buy something so useless and cute.

Katsuki picked up the bear by one arm and sure enough, it was just a plain regular stuffed animal. It was squishy and soft, with curly brown fur too. Dropping it back to where it was, Katsuki turned around when he heard the doorknob turning.

“Xanxus?” Katsuki questioned with an arched eyebrow when he saw the man coming inside the room. The person standing in front of the blond was Xanxus but not the one he was used to. Varia’s uniform jacket draped over his shoulder and the front of his dress shirt was unbuttoned, revealing the tanned muscles and scars underneath. His hair was longer, no longer pushed back and in an undercut. His bangs hung loose and sort of obscured his eyes but they can’t hide the ferocity behind those wine red eyes. The tail decoration in his hair was also missing and he looked a bit larger, packing more muscles than the last time Katsuki saw him.

Xanxus also seemed a bit surprised to see him. Furrowing his eyebrows, the man walked over and bent down slightly.

“You got hit by Bovino’s trash,” he stated and a rough hand landed on Katsuki’s head, messing up his hair.

“Bovino...You mean the kid dressed like a cow?”

“The ten years bazooka.” Xanxus nodded as he pulled his hand back. The familiar scars on his body were visible but Katsuki noticed he gained a few new ones too. “Anyone hit with it switches places with their future self ten years in the future. You’ll switch back in five minutes.”

“Wait, I’m in the future?” Time travel. *And* the mafia achieved it through technology, not quirks! Katsuki was in awe. Quirks that manipulated time and space were rare but it wouldn’t be as surprising to find out that there was a time traveller quirk out there. The world was big after all. But these mafia scientists had done that without a quirk.

They were really amazing.

Xanxus answered him by scooping him off the floor. The familiar heat and the sensation of strong arms around him made Katsuki relaxed. Katsuki leaned into the touch and nuzzled closer against his boyfriend. He smelled a faint scent of the spices in alcohols and cologne, which he was used to.

“Who bought the bear?”

“You did.”

The answer made Katsuki smile a little.

Xanxus sat down in his chair and kicked his feet onto the table. Picking up a book on the side, he flipped it open and started reading without acknowledging Katsuki further. This was fine with the blond since this was how they usually spent their times together anyways. They would be doing their own things while keeping the other close. He took a peek at what Xanxus was reading and realized it was in Latin.

Sometimes he forgot that his boyfriend went to a prestigious private school and had at least a dozen private tutors to teach him all sorts of languages and fancy social etiquettes. And *this* was what Sawada had to catch up to before he became of age. Katsuki didn’t know if he should feel sorry for the brown haired teen or not but he does know that he would be adding learning Latin to his schedule when he returned back to the past.

Normally the blond would pull out his phone or do something else but he decided to spend the next few minutes studying future Xanxus.

The man wasn’t nicer. Katsuki would be horrified if Xanxus turned *nicer*. The assassin boss was...how should he describe it? Calmer? Yeah, that was probably it. His aura wasn’t as sharp or stingy, like a volcano on the verge of erupting. Age seemed to have soothed out a few rough edges and Xanxus looked like he was in more control of his anger. If the younger version of Xanxus was a lion ready for a hunt, this Xanxus was more like the one sleeping under the shade on a bright sunny day.

But that didn’t mean he was any bit less dangerous. Provoke him and the ones who disrupted his rest will still get torn to shreds.

The crease between his eyebrows was still there. Xanxus hadn’t lost the hardness in his eyes or the ice cold edge along the corners of his lips. Katsuki was sure the fire was still burning bright within him too. The Flame of Wrath wasn’t something that could be quenched out. It was a wildfire that only knew how to spread and burn everything in its path to ashes.

Something behind the curtains caught Katsuki’s attention. Stretching his neck out, he saw something large and furry emerging from behind the curtains. It was a huge white lion with a long silky mane and dangerous red eyes. It growled a bit at Katsuki when it noticed him

staring.

“Xanxus, we got a lion?” Katsuki lowered his voice instinctively. There was something about seeing such a huge carnivore up close that activated the survival instinct in everyone’s heads. The intuitions were built into their genes and it was screaming at him in alarm as he stared at the king of the jungles.

“It’s not a lion, it’s a lingre.” The man didn’t even look up from his book. “Bester.”

Upon hearing its name, the lion came over slowly and sat down without so much of a purr when Xanxus glanced at it. Up close, Katsuki noticed the animal was larger than he expected and it was *cool.* The closest he had ever been to such a large beast was at the zoo and there was reinforced glass separating them.

The liger stared at him with a sort of curious look (Katsuki wasn’t sure how he read that emotion off an animal) before making a noise at Xanxus.

Xanxus set his book down and glanced down at it. Bester purred but it sounded more like a deep rumble from the back of its throat. It moved its head closer and sniffed Katsuki, who stayed still as the beast’s sharp fangs were only inches from his flesh. It seemed to be a bit confused as it studied Katsuki.

Patting Xanxus on the chest, Katsuki had been too busy gawking at the animal to pay attention to how the firm muscles felt under his palm. “Can I touch it?”

“Bester,” Xanxus commanded in a low raspy voice. “Hand.”

The lingre tilted its head to the side as if it was wondering why its master would make such an odd order, but it still dropped its paw on Katsuki’s thigh. It didn’t move away when Katsuki patted its paw back either. Seeing that, the blond teen got a bit more confident and he proceeded to stroke its fur. He might be doing something right because Bester’s tail started wiggling. Petting a linger felt strange, its fur was the softest thing Katsuki had ever known and it radiated heat like a walking furnace.

He laughed when it licked his hand.

“You’re the best!” Katsuki threw himself back into Xanxus’s embrace. He liked everything he had seen about their future so far. Judging

from the vanity set, Katsuki was pretty sure future him had basically shared a room with Xanxus. The younger Xanxus had no problem letting Katsuki sleep in his bed but wouldn't have let him infested his room with these "troublesome" or "pathetic" stuff like toy teddy bears.

It wasn't that Katsuki adored those stupid toys either but it felt nice to have things that his parents never bought for him when ever other kid would have one. He vaguely remembered that it was because he didn't have such great control over his quirk when he was young so he would end up exploding a few of his toys. His parents stopped replacing them because "he obviously wasn't taking good care of them and it was just a waste of money".

And Xanxus got them a liger. Not a lion or a tiger. A *liger*.

A huge grin pasted on his face as he left a light peck on his boyfriend's jaw. Hey, ten years later or not, if they were still together then this guy was *his*. He totally had a right to kiss him.

A large hand tilted his chin up and his lips were claimed in a kiss. It was hungry and forceful, which made the blond teen feel like he was going to be devoured. He could feel Xanxus's tongue invading his mouth, sweeping over his teeth and tangling with his own tongue. Moaning into his partner's lips, Katsuki leaned in closer when another hand trailed down his spine to wrap around his waist.

When the kiss ended, he was blushing and slightly out of breath. His vision was a bit hazy and he could barely make out the red of Xanxus's eyes in front of him.

"Don't look at me like that if you don't want to get fucked," a dark chuckle sounded from beside his ear and Katsuki could feel the heat rushing to his face.

Yep, still his bastard boyfriend. Time hadn't made him soft or nice. He was still a prick but Katsuki wouldn't exchange him for anyone else. He knew Xanxus had his flaws. The man liked to drink, was violent, had a temper, and on top of it all, he was *mafia.* Katsuki had a million good reasons to walk away, yet he could never bring himself to do so.

Xanxus was a horrible and despicable man. But he was also protective of what was his and although he never said anything sweet or loving, he showed it.

Katsuki doesn't expect to ever be able to hear Xanxus admit he loved

him but it made him feel warm to know that they were still together, even after all these years. He had a place somewhere that accepted him for who he was and someone who would hold him in the dead of the night, someone who would shield him from the chaos and harshness of the world.

He looked up to Xanxus. Ever since the day they met, Katsuki had always looked up to the older Italian male. It was different from how he viewed All Might. Katsuki wanted to win and beat up villains like All Might but he was even more enchanted by the fire in Xanxus's eyes. He saw a drive that was unmatched and he was starstruck by the sheer amount of confidence Xanxus had in himself. The blond knew that Xanxus wouldn't stop or slow down for anybody but that only made him want to catch up even more. To become someone who could stay by the Varia boss's side, shoulder to shoulder.

Katsuki wanted to get stronger, to climb higher, to see a world other than the peaceful illusion painted by propogandas and illuminating lights of heroic smiles. Not everything was black and white. He knew that from a young age but to *experience* it was a whole different thing.

He found solace in knowing that Xanxus would always be there for him. The man might not help him when he fell or tripped but he was like a guiding light, always shining and showing him a direction in the sea of darkness.

When the walls started caving in and when he felt like the ground was slipping out like sand from underneath his feet, he would always knew where to turn to and keep marching on. Xanxus's presence was like a bullet in his chest, etched into his flesh and made his heart pumped faster than normal. Was this what love was? Katsuki wasn't really sure but he thought it was close enough.

All he knew was that he would gladly follow this man to hell if he had to.

He was seeing pink again. The mist consumed him and he adjusted his body to prepare for the landing. Katsuki wasn't going to land flat on his ass in front of Sawada and his friends. When the fog cleared, he was back in the present again. Katsuki scanned his environment and sure enough, there was teen Sawada and the rest of his chaotic gang of guardians.

The only thing was that all of them were eyeing him like they had seen a ghost.

“The fuck are you trash looking at me like that for?” Katsuki sneered. To his surprise, the teenagers only continued to stare at him while also taking an involuntary step backwards together.

Sawada raised his hand weakly and his voice was about as loud as a mosquito flying by when he explained, “Um…Future you showed up in a dress and they know you’re Victoire now…?”

There was a weird lift in his tone at the end of his sentence that made Sawada’s words sound more like a question. He also immediately ducked behind his friends when Katsuki glared at him.

“Jesus Christ, *you’re* the one half the school is thirsting after?” Gokudera exclaimed and his hands were shaking when he tried to light another cigarette. “Please tell me you have a secondary quirk that allows you to enchant people because…how in the world did you manage to pull *that* off?”

Yamamoto, a guy with short black hair and a baseball bat, laughed. “Ahahaha, you look good in a dress, Katsuki-kun.”

Katsuki didn’t really know him. All he remembered was that this was the guy Squalo had fought during the rain battles and Yamamoto used a sword too. Judging from the wide happy smile, the blond guessed that he had a similar personality to Shitty Hair but might be missing a few wires inside his head. He had heard that apparently Yamamoto thought all of this mafia stuff was just a roleplaying game even *after* he had been dragged into a few life or death incidents.

“Why the hell did you tell them who I was?” Katsuki hissed at Sawada. He didn’t think future him would be willing to share his biggest secret.

“If I didn’t they would have agreed on you being transgender and underwent a sex change surgery in the future years.”

Idiots.

All of them were idiots.

And now these idiots knew he was Victoire.

If they knew, Katsuki was pretty sure the other extras in the Tenth generation would know soon too. So much for his secret.

“Ah, pretty lady turned into scary meanie,” the kid that sent Katsuki

into the future said. “His boobs are smaller too.”

And that absolutely made him snapped.

“Sawada!” Katsuki shouted angrily at the brown haired teen. He had seen the guy trying to hide that cow kid in his arms before he ducked away. “Hand the damn brat over! I’m going to teach him why the fuck he shouldn’t be running wild with a fucking *bazooka!* Why the hell are you even letting him run around with that thing?”

People would notice it and would want to take it for themselves. Katsuki knew first hand how sleazy some adults were. Quirk and support equipment trafficking was a thing, now imagine if the villains knew a kid had a time travelling device.

“Wait! Bakugou-kun! Lambo didn’t do it on purpose! He’s only five!”

“Exactly, he’s *only* five! I don’t care if he’s mafia. What kind of five years old run around with firearms? Don’t tell me he also has fucking grenades in his hair!”

Sawada looked hesitant. “...Um, no?” he offered weakly.

Pausing, Katsuki’s eyes widened in disbelief. “...Shit, he has grenades in his hair? And you fucking *let* him?”

Sawada looked like he was going to pee himself as he gulped nervously. Before Katsuki could grab him and give him a piece of his mind, Hibari jumped in and blocked his hand with a strike of his tonfas. Katsuki had to leap back in order to prevent the metal from smacking right into his face.

“You’re the one who was supposed to be the monkey boss’s cloud.” Looked like Hibari didn’t forget about Belphegor’s comment from before. He lifted an amused smile as he raised his tonfas. “That piece of metal was a joke so you still owe me a proper fight. I’m going to bite you to death.”

Katsuki also lifted a wicked grin and took out his weapons. He *really* needed to stab somebody right now.

“Bring it, jackass! I can wipe the floor with you even without my quirk.”

“No! Hibari-senpai, wait! Bakugou-kun, please don’t provoke him! Eiiii!! Nooooo!”

“Haha, Tsuna! Let’s start running before Hibari targets us too!”

“Tenth! Duck!”

“Eh? Wh—Oww!!”

“Hibari you bastard! You hit the Tenth! Eat dynamite!”

Explosions rocked the park.

Somewhere a little further, Reborn sat on the branch of a tree with his binoculars and took a sip of his coffee slowly while he enjoyed the chaos. “Ah, just another peaceful day in Namimori.”

The pink mist faded and the person emerging from it dropped himself onto the linger on the carpeted ground.

“Hey Bester,” he greeted as he scratched the beast’s chin and kissed its mane. Bester whimpered and licked the person’s hand. It didn’t know what happened but it was more familiar with this scent. The other human who had been in the room seconds ago smelled similar but wasn’t exactly the same.

“I think I scared the living daylights out of Tsunayoshi and the rest of the fools when I showed up in this.” The older Katsuki laughed while he leaned against his boyfriend’s box animal. He was in a red dress that had a slit that opened up to the middle of his thigh on the right side. It had become a habit to dress as Victoire while he was at the Varia’s base.

He honestly didn’t mind it either. Sometimes he even enjoyed dressing up and seeing all the newbies blush when he smiled. They would inevitably be subjected to Xanxus’s beating but Squalo would always pat Katsuki on the back to signal a job well done. Hey, it was extra training for if someone tried to use the beauty tactic and lure information from them. Katsuki was doing all of them a favor.

“They’re always going to be trash.”

Shifting over, Katsuki rested his head on Xanxus’s thigh. He knew that the man still despised Vongola Tenth, even going as far as setting up another smaller flag next to the official Varia one that said they didn’t acknowledge Tsuna as the Tenth. “And that’s why I love you.”

Xanxus only grunted as a response.

It had been ten years and he was still a grumpy grinch with guarded lips. But Katsuki doesn't push him, he could only admit to his own emotions when he was Victoire so he wasn't in any position to complain. Rough fingers brushed by his face lightly, caressing the skin along the edge of his jaw and up his cheeks. Blinking, Katsuki noticed the man stopped around his eyes since the blond had added a few glittery stars when he applied his makeup today. He had kept the eyeshadows light and used the stars to complete the look. Katsuki liked it, almost looked like he had cried stars.

Laughing softly, he lifted a hand and gently trailed a manicured finger down the zippers of Xanxus's pants, feeling the bulge that was starting to form underneath. The Varia boss pinched Katsuki's earlobe slightly, rubbing the pearl studs embedded in that soft piece of flesh.

Katsuki knew that was his signal to continue.

"Boss! Sorry to interrupt but me really am not cut out for this babysitting business!" a teenager's panicking voice suddenly cried out from the communicator on the table. He had a weird way of speaking but both of the adults could tell how desperate he sounded. "Can one of you *please* come remove your hellspawn off my hands? Me would rather go on a mission with the fake prince!"

The blond tittered when he saw Xanxus's expression darkened. He got up and smoothed out the wrinkles on his dress before heading for the doors. Only, he didn't get very far before Xanxus hauled him over his shoulders like a sack of potatoes.

"Hey, Fran's still waiting for help," reminded Katsuki as he got thrown into the bed. "Sounds like he's getting overwhelmed."

They could still hear Fran's loud complaints even all the way across the room, which was really uncharacteristic of the teen. Although he was usually sassy, there wouldn't be much emotion in his speech and he certainly wouldn't sound like he was being marched off the plank.

"He can suck it up and deal with it," Xanxus grumbled while pulling off his shirt as he climbed on top of his lover. The blond leaned back into the soft feather pillows as he marveled at the chiseled muscles riddled with scars. A hand was up his dress, lighting fire across his skin when Xanxus pulled back slightly and ordered, "Bester."

Katsuki heard the sound of a device smashing into the ground and

knew the beast probably swatted the communicator onto the ground to silence it. Sighing, he pulled Xanxus into a kiss forcefully and reminded the man to use condoms.

Squalo would probably kill them if they made a second oopsie baby.

Chapter End Notes

Sneak peaks into the future ;)

Future Xanxus is hotter than his younger self XD really wish we could have seen more of him in canon.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

There was something All Might thought was growing concern as the school year progressed. He had chosen Midoriya Izuku as his successor last year and the boy had been steadily improving. Both his physiques and his mind have been trained sharper under UA's well rounded curriculum.

He was making friends and gaining confidence. It was wonderful to see his pupil flourish and All Might was doing everything he could to ensure the boy would be ready to shoulder the burden of OFA's legacy one day.

That was why he observed things that concerned him. To be fair, he knew that teenagers could get rowdy and the chances of students never having skirmishes with each other were slim but what he saw...it didn't look like a simple dispute that could be talked out in the course of five minutes or soothed down by detentions and time outs.

UA was a competitive place. The hero industry was competitive in general. While they emphasized on teamwork, it was equally important for each hero to be able to shine in their own way. Media attention, *the good kind*, was essential for their career if they wanted to climb the ranks fast. All Might hadn't been too worried when he first saw the tension between Bakugou and Midoriya. They were children and Bakugou was naturally competitive with everyone.

On the other hand, Midoriya...the situation with the green haired teen was a bit more complex. Midoriya and Bakugou grew up together in the same neighborhood but they grew apart as time passed. Bakugou had talent and was gifted a strong quirk while Midoriya was quirkless. There was some stigmatization and prejudice around quirkless people these days so it wasn't hard to imagine what young Midoriya went through. All Might didn't try to interfere at first because he saw a drive, a fire, that burned in Midoriya's eyes when he fought Bakugou during training.

It was obvious Midoriya looked up to Bakugou. The blond was

everything he wished he could be—confident and strong. The green haired boy admired his childhood friend's strength and it was motivation for him to work harder. All Might had seen how good Bakugou was in combat. Midoriya was trying to catch up to him.

But the more he observed, the more he realized there was something darker underneath the chase. Midoriya flinched when Bakugou yelled and his tongue grew numb when he had to talk to the blond. The stuttering and the meek behavior...they were evidence of *fear*. But why would he be afraid of his childhood friend?

Concerned, All Might had questioned his young prodigy in private. Midoriya had been reluctant to answer at first but after some patience and persuasion from the NO.1 hero, he eventually started talking.

The story he told was a heartbreaking one.

Due to his quirkless status and soft spoken nature, Midoriya had been the subject of ridicule for the majority of his childhood. No one thought he had what it took to become a hero and most believed he was a useless member of society. His peers called him names and shoved him around, some of the things they did were even borderline on bullying. No, it *was* bullying.

There was envy and a bit of resentment mixed into his admiration and respect for Bakugou. While the blond hadn't actively participated in making Midoriya's life hell, he had been another apathetic pair of eyes that witnessed the whole thing throughout the years. Bakugou had been mostly ignorant of the abuse going on, even though they were in the same class from kindergarten all the way up to their last year of middle school.

He never provided a helping hand or told the others to back off. One word from him could have made everyone stop the harassment since he had a sort of authority over their peers. Bakugou was an intimidating child overflowing with confidence. He wouldn't back down from a fight either and that combined with his quirk, most wouldn't want to defy him. But he...he just watched. According to Midoriya, Bakugou was always rushing to places and he never stopped to acknowledge Midoriya's existence properly after the green haired teen was officially diagnosed quirkless. It was like...Midoriya was invisible and meaningless to him.

That part All Might had known. Bakugou seemed a bit distant from the rest of the students and he always finished training exercises as

soon as possible. Even in the first hero vs villain training, although he had exhibited some disbelief about Midroiya making into the hero course, he recovered and quickly roped up Uraraka and Midoriya, subduing them with the capture tape. If they were talking hand-to-hand, Bakugou was second to none in class 1-A. The only thing was, he didn't see them as classmates or villains, when Bakugou closed and opened those crimson eyes, all the rage and confusion was gone. He saw them as a mission to be complete and that was it.

It was like his classmates would never be obstacles to overcome or competitors in his eyes, even though they were all in the same race together.

That was part of the reason why Midoriya was chasing after Bakugou so hard. He wanted the blond to *finally* see him eye to eye, to treat him like an equal and not just a prop in the background or the wallflower.

All Might had taken Midoriya's words to heart as he watched Bakugou more closely. The blond had made it abundantly clear that he didn't like Midoriya's company since the start of the school year. They were not friends in Bakugou's eyes. Maybe he never thought they were. He even started the nickname "Deku" because he thought Midoriya was a useless crybaby. There were other mean things he said and when the other kids saw how Bakugou treated Midoriya, they followed his example.

That caused scars, emotional ones, to linger inside Midoriya. Normal teens shouldn't be so skittish but he was. His confidence had been stunted and he trembled or flinched when he had to face Bakugou.

Not that it was hard to understand. There were rough edges in Bakugou's personality that made him...looked less heroic or approachable. Now, All Might wasn't saying that the blond wouldn't be a good hero. He had the brains and the firepower with combat skills far superior than his peers to back up his ambition. But Bakugou was fixated on a victory that was so far away that he couldn't and wouldn't stop to realize the things and people around him.

"Young Bakugou...may I speak with you for a moment?" All Might asked during break. The blond looked up at him and nodded, following him out into the empty halls in silence.

"What do you want, All Might?" The blond's tone was a bit rude but that was just how he usually talked.

“I noticed…a bit of tension between you and young Midroiya,” All Might said as his blue eyes studied the boy in front of him. “And you seem to have a bit of animosity for him along with a tendency to ignore him. I would like to know why you have decided to treat him this way. While I understand that not everyone would like to be friends with everybody, it has come to my attention that the situation between you and Midoriya might start interfering with both of your progresses.”

“What do you mean?” Bakugou didn’t seem to get what was going on.

“I have spoken with young Midoriya about it and while he told me a few…not so pleasant things from your past. It seems that you have grown distant from each other and the communication between you two is very truncated.”

“Because he’s just Deku.” The blond teen was obviously getting irritated. There was a deep scowl on his face. “Why would I need to chit chat with Deku to become a better hero?”

“It’s not just about talking to him.” Shaking his head, All Might decided to be a little more straightforward. “Young Bakugou, have you intimidated Midoriya with your quirk before? Stand by and watch him get harassed by your classmates? Or called him names because he was a late bloomer and his quirk came in very late?”

“So *that* is what this is about?” Bakugou rubbed his neck with a sense of frustration and apathetic air.

Seeing that, All Might’s expression turned a bit more stern. “Bakugou, this is a very serious matter.”

“All Might,” the teen called as he lifted his head to stare straight at All Might. “Do you know how long it takes to master one language?”

All Might was taken back by that strange question.

“I’m fluent in at least five languages and can read two more,” Bakugou kept going. There was a hue of something unreadable in those crimson eyes. It looked like determination and longing. “Chores, training, and school work…I’m out of school as soon as the bell rings so I can squeeze in time to learn. I’m *not* around 90% of the time Midoriya gets harassed, or so you said he was. I don’t know what he told you or how complicated of a situation he is making this out to be but the truth is simple—we have *never* been friends. Our personalities clash and we only hung out when we were kids because our parents are friends.

That doesn't mean I am obliged to like Midroiya or look after him."

"But when he was being harassed by—"

"He never fought back," Bakugou cut him off coldly. "He might be quirkless for the majority of his life so far but he spent just as much of those times moping around and sulking. While I'm training my ass off, he just took notes and dreamed. He couldn't have run a lap or two? Join the boxing club or something? Quirks weren't everything that made a hero but all he did was obsessed over quirks and did nothing to improve his own situation. Why is it my responsibility to help someone who doesn't even try to save himself first?"
All Might was speechless. He couldn't say that Bakugou's logic was wrong but it wasn't very heroic either. At least, not the mainstream kind of heroism. If it was All Might, he would have helped Midoriya out.

As if reading his thoughts, Bakugou frowned, yet his gaze never wavered. "I can't save him every time. I can chase away bullies but they would come back because he is an easy target. And honestly, seeing Deku's stupid wishful face pissed me off. Makes my training seem like a joke when he's doing nothing you know? I'm not Midoriya's keeper."

"That's—"

"Yeah, you're gonna say that's not how to beat villains right? If we want to beat the big bad in the future we will have to work together and yada yada. I don't like him but I'll work with him." Bakugou shrugged. "I don't mix personal feelings with work. Just don't expect me to start getting buddy buddy with him. We're not toddlers and this is real life. People are not obliged to love each other and be all sunshine and rainbows. Are we done?"

"...Yes, we are done." All Might couldn't help but feel a sense of defeat when he realized the whole conversation had been controlled by Bakugou. It wasn't like he could argue with Bakugou about the points he made. Yes, Bakugou didn't own Midoriya anything. Even if that thought didn't sit well with the pro hero. Maybe he really wasn't cut out for this teaching job.

Bakugou nodded at him before turning on his heels to leave, as he walked away, he waved a bit. His words almost made All Might's heart stop for a second.

"Oh, and your favouritism is showing. Tell that stupid nerd to suck it

up and do whatever he want, I ain't slowing down for anybody. I don't have time to waste on that shit."
The NO.1 hero sighed and waited as his colleague came out from around the corner.

"He's right, you know?" Aizawa said slowly as his dark tired eyes trained onto the blond man. "You do seem to care about Midoriya a little more than the other kids in class."

And All Might suddenly found himself in grave need for new excuses.

2

There were quite a few underground heroes operating in Japan. It was inevitable, not everyone enjoyed being in the spotlight and there was grilling work that had to be done in order to keep society functioning. Some of these missions were not glamorous and others were better kept away from the public's knowledge.

A few underground heroes, like Aizawa, had more of a presence. While he tended to avoid the spotlight, his work was still known by the locals and within the hero community. However, there were also heroes whose names were hidden so well that it almost felt like they were merely *rumours*. Like a myth or urban legend circulating around to keep the criminals on the edge of their nerves and think twice before carrying out a crime.

The Commission loved this type of hero for their more...underhand missions. The ones that needed to be carried out quietly in the dark of the night. Never seen and never heard. The ones that wasn't *heroic*. Someone had to do the "necessary evils" that kept their society running like a well oiled machine.

Which was why Aizawa was confused by the paperwork in front of him.

The internships were coming up soon and he was reviewing everyone's pick of their placements. It had been normal, most kids chose places that Aizawa thought were suitable for their own personalities and strengths. Iida's choice made him a bit cautious but he let it slide for now. However, he paused again when he saw Bakugou's application.

Bakugou had declined offers from top heroes around the country and picked an agency that Aizawa had barely heard of before.

Hearsay.

That was a strange name for a hero. Aizawa went on the pro heroes site and confirmed that this was indeed a licensed hero but they operated without a stable agency. They were almost like a doctor without borders in a sense, moving from city to city, to wherever they were needed. Not a lot of people had heard about them before and Aizawa couldn't find any notable news or reports on them making big arrests. That either meant they were a very mediocre hero or that the work they did was so *dangerous* that it had to be buried deep deep down.

When he asked Bakguou about it, the blond only huffed: "I'll be fine. I don't like dealing with the media, that's all. Might as well learn something more practical."

Bakugou was loud and he attracted attention. It did make sense for a perfectionist like him to want to be well rounded and train himself up in stealth. Aizawa tried to tell himself that he was worried about nothing. Bakugou clearly had his own opinions and he was responsible enough to make his own decisions. He can't stop the teen from packing up and leaving either. Hearsay's offer came in the official way and there were no rules against students interning with underground heroes.

Somehow, Aizawa was still finding it hard to convince himself that everything would be alright.

There was something unholy about airports at five AM. It was still mostly barren and empty, like a ghost town. The place was too large and cold that made people question if they were the only ones left in the world.

Euclide pulled his coat tighter as he stood in the waiting area. He was in a normal suit and a brown coat since he wasn't out for a mission right now. Captain Squalo had ordered him to come retrieve Victoire from the airport since the higher commanding officers were all busy.

The girl showed up in a hoodie and jeans along with a plain looking suitcase. She also wore a mask and sunglasses even though it was still dark outside. He helped her place the luggage into the back of the car and they drove off.

"Lady Victoire," Euclide said respectfully when they returned to

Varia's castle. It was already close to six AM and the people in the castle should be up and about soon. "Boss is still out for now but Captain Squalo and a few other officers are in the castle. I have notified them of your return. Should I inform the kitchen to bring you something hot to drink or some light snacks?"

The maids and cooks didn't mind serving her. While the servants were terrified of Boss, his little girlfriend was much easier to satisfy and she had never made their lives hell. The girl doesn't toss food around if it didn't suit her taste or kick them if they were too slow.

"No need. Breakfast is almost starting anyways." She was a cold beauty. There was just this air of I-am-above-you-all from her that was oddly similar to the feeling that Boss gave off.

"Princess!"

A figure swooped down from the chandelier and grabbed hold of the blonde girl. Before Euclide could scream, Vicotire was already flying through the air, directly at Captain Squalo who was standing on the top flight of stairs. He caught her.

"Bel! How many times do I gotta tell you to not throw me like a rugby ball!" Victoire shouted angrily as she sat in the cradle of Captain Squalo's secured hold.

"You're too light! Can't blame the prince for mistaking you as one!" the other blond teenager hollered while running off before Victoire could throw something back at him. He might not look the part but he was stronger than most would presume.

"I swear I'm going to swap his conditioner into hair dye someday."

"Make it the most ugly green," Squalo grumbled in agreement. "Or pink. Hot pink. He's going to hate it so damn much."

Euclide thought green would be the better choice. Good for camouflage too.

Captain Squalo set Victoire down and they all started moving towards the dining hall. They ran into Boss and Lussuria coming in from the other end of the corridor.

"Xanxus!" Her smile brightened up as soon as the man came into her view. The girl threw herself at the dark haired man and got on her tiptoes to plant a kiss on Xanxus's cheek.

Sometimes Euclide was sure Victoire was blind. It always puzzled him what she saw in the man. Sure, Xanxus had money and power but he was also notoriously *violent.* Anyone with half a brain or a decent lick of survival instinct wouldn't touch him with a ten feet pole. But Victoire wasn't here for wealth or status. She was genuinely happy as she stared at the head of assassins with pure adoration.

And that smile seemed to be brighter than the sun.

This would be Euclide's cue to leave. He didn't want to stick around while his superiors had breakfast together. That sounded like a nightmare for little shrimps like him.

The door to the dining hall shut behind him.

"So, Katsuki is going to be here for the whole week right?" Squalo asked while passing the salt over.

"Yeah," the blond replied as he dug into his own food. Bel and Mammon both had missions so they weren't here. "They think I'm interning with Hearsay, the underground hero."

And technically he was. Hearsay was just an illusion set up by Mammon years ago to gain intel on the heroes. Information was valuable so of course the illusionist would want a piece of that business.

Katsuki also thought that it would be better for him if he worked with Varia for the week instead of interning at a hero agency. The offers he got...well, he discarded those from heroes known for brute strength since he knew he wasn't lacking firepower. Then he moved on and reviewed the rest. There were quite a few suggesting they could "fix him" or teach him how to be a better, well mannered hero. Those got tossed out along with the ones from heroes who got bad rep (and he meant real bad reputations that he verified through his underground networks). When the pile was significantly smaller, he moved on to the hero agencies that were higher ranked. While he did see one from Best Jeanist's agency, one quick search online told him that he probably wouldn't like it there.

The sidekicks were...streamlined, like they came out of a factory. And it was well known that Best Jeanist himself could be uptight and proper. Since Katsuki knew first years weren't going to be seeing much action anyways, he wasn't interested in wasting his time with these offers.

In the end, he decided to spend a week with Varia while doing his model business on the side. He would be earning more money and what better way to learn about villains than watch them work out their schemes? Katsuki would be learning deeper about where to best station a bomb, how to devise an assassination...and all sorts of other evils.

“That’s great!” Lussuria exclaimed as he held up his hands in excitement. “Mammon said the sponsors have already shipped the new clothing for the next show here. I will help you try them on later. Oh, the press loved your red carpet walk last time and so many of them are saying Victoire was a bewitching one. Quite a few of them even wrote that they saw flowers and butterflies blooming in the background when you walked by.”

“Flowers and butterflies?” Levi sounded confused.

“Special effects added by Mammon,” Katsuki answered. He thought that was too much too. It wasn’t like he was the female lead to a girly manga or something like that. But Mammon just had to be so extra about it. “They said I got to be dazzling.”

“Like you’re not sparkly enough already?” Levi had a policy of not going anywhere near where Katsuki kept all of his Victoire stuff. The lace and the flowy dresses gave him the creeps, especially considering that Katsuki also liked to stash his weapon in the strangest and most unexpected places inside the fabric.

“I think they want me to be able to make people faint on sight.”

“That sounds like a new way to kill someone.”

They continued eating and chatting. Xanxus had been quiet most of the time and Katsuki could tell the man was sleepy due to his work. They were assassins, it wasn’t unusual for them to be working odd hours. The most noise he made so far was when he threw a glass of water at Squalo when the Captain raised his voice a little too loud.

When they were all done eating, Katsuki accompanied Xanxus back to his room. His luggage had already been dropped off here. There wasn’t much inside since he had all he needed in Varia already. Katsuki has his own room but he doesn’t use it much other than to store clothing or change and do his model makeup. Xanxus didn’t like those distractions and useless objects inside his room. At least, the him right now wouldn’t allow it.

The blond smiled to himself silently as he remembered what he had seen in the future.

“What’s with the dumb grin?” A hand was in his hair, messing up his hair roughly then patted him on face carelessly. Xanxus had taken a shower and his hair was still damp with moisture. Droplets of water dripped down the end of his hair and slipped down the toned edge of the muscles on his bare chest. His hair was down, resembling the hairstyle that ten years later him had, and although his face was younger, Katsuki could practically see how age would polish the man. His heart felt a little woozy just thinking about it.

“It’s nothing.” The blond was humming as he dried Xanxus’s hair with a towel.

Of course Xanxus noticed Katsuki’s obnoxiously good mood but he didn’t say anything. He sat down on the bed and pulled Katsuki down into the silk and velvet sheets when the teen was done drying his hair.

Nuzzling closer into the heated and secured embrace, Katsuki signed with a sense of content. He could smell the familiar scent of soap that Xanxus always used. He pressed his face against the strong muscles and his muscles seemed to have melted, the tension from being on a flight for hours dissipated. It made him relaxed despite his mind telling him that there was still more work to be done today.

Long distance relationships are hard, especially when their time zones differ. And it wasn’t just that. They were also hero and villain, not exactly a combination that society liked to see together. And there was some stress from school that Katsuki didn’t think he needed to trouble anyone else with. He knew from the start of the school year that there was something going on between Midoriya and All Might. No one just *magically got* a quirk on the day of UA’s entrance exam and a strong one too. That was too convenient to be coincidence. Not to mention, neither the hero or the freckled teen were subtle about it. He was sure a lot of people in class noticed All Might meeting Deku in private a little too frequently. It seemed like the No.1 was there to mentor Deku more than he was there to teach them.

His suspicions were confirmed when All Might approached him about his past with Midoriya. It took everything in him to not laugh. Sure, he knew that the kids in their neighborhood and old schools looked down upon Deku. But he doesn’t understand how that was any of his problems. Training and being Victoire took up most of his time. And being a model wasn’t easy either. He had to keep up a certain

physique and learn how to be more than just a pretty face. On top of it all, he was also learning the mafia's way from Squalo. They were mafia and top notch ones too. They can't be acting like classless street thugs all the time. The social etiquettes of how to deal with certain situations or people were different.

Katsuki didn't have time to care about Midoriya and his self esteem issues. They were not friends and Katsuki had no intention of saving the punk when Midoriya couldn't even find the courage to take the first step first. Spoon feeding him and giving him a tug or two along the way were two different things in Katsuki's eyes, and the former wouldn't help much in Midoriya's case. Some would probably call him cold but he wasn't about to start babying someone the same age as him just because he got criticized.

He also didn't get why the boy never tried to take the first step himself. Even if he took Varia out of the equation, Hibari and that white haired boxing weirdo in Sawada's friend group could both hold their own forts without the need for quirks.

But it still kind of stung to know that his childhood hero, the target he aimed to surpass one day, only cared about him because of Midoriya. It was just like with his parents, Katsuki was the byproduct, the side piece that was always lacking something when compared to Midoriya.

At their cores, Midoriya Izuku will always be a better person than he was. He was selfless and kind, easier to approach and befriend. Even if a lot of Midoriya's better qualities manifested as pointless and idealistic self-righteous sacrifices, he was still stubbornly *good*. Kind and helping. The sort of qualities that people wanted to find in a hero.

Pushing that thought out of his head, he stretched his neck to see that Xanxus had closed his eyes already. The man had his arms around Katsuki's waist tightly, which made it difficult for him to get off the bed.

"I have to work." Katsuki poked him but only got a gruff grunt as a response. Xanxus was never a man of many words, he was even more silent when he was tired or hungry...but never less violent. *Never*.

He tried again and planted a soft kiss on the edge of the assassin's chin. Katsuki also attempted to get up himself. He already slept on the plane so he wasn't that tired. "I'm here on an internship, not a vacation."

This time he got more of a response. Xanxus turned over and pinned

the blond teen underneath his weight.

Fuck.

“Xanxus,” Katsuki whined. His fingers threaded through the raven hair and brushed a few strands of loose hair out of his lover’s face. Even when he was resting there was still a hint of shadows between Xanxus’s eyebrows.

“Shut up.” Came the raspy reply.

“I’m serious. Let me up. I’ll make you dinner tonight.”

“Your food tastes like crap.”

“You’d still finish it anyways.”

He might not be a five star chef but Katsuki knew his food wasn’t bad. These Varia idiots wouldn’t be getting seconds if his food tasted bad. Xanxus was just extremely picky about his food to the point where sometimes Katsuki thought his boyfriend was doing it on purpose to piss the chefs off. Or that it was overcompensation for his impoverished childhood.

Crimson eyes met wine red ones. Xanxus lifted his eyelids lazily and even though he was still on the verge of dozing off, the intensity in his glance still held a predatory gleam. Rolling onto his back, the man finally released him.

Climbing up, Katsuki kissed him on the lips. “Sleep well.”

Katsuki left the room quietly, knowing that Squalo would be waiting for him in his office. He would need a shower and a change of clothing first. Something a little more feminine. A little bit more Victoire since he was in the mood.

As he travelled down the long hall with the elaborate gold engravings and relief sculptures in the ceilings, Katsuki couldn't help but stretched his back out with a soft grin on his face.

He had a feeling this was going to be a good week.

Chapter End Notes

> Katsuki and Midoriya's relationship takes a slightly different twist in all my stories (sweat drop)

Hope you all enjoyed this chapter :)

BTW: new story with Bakugou rare pair (again LOL)

https://archiveofourown.org/works/34041205/chapters/84673471

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

"I'm so sorry! Xanxus is absolutely going to kill me if he finds out but I really really need your help and I know I am asking too much already but please *please* help me out!"

Katsuki was met with a full on dogeza by Vongola Tenth when he visited the Sawada house this weekend. The brown haired teen was on his hands and knees with his forehead pressed to the wooden floor. Yamamoto was standing behind him, hands pressed together as he gave Katsuki one of his usual smiles.

"We could really use a helping hand, Katsuki."

"Hey, you two! Get up! Don't beg *Varia* for help!" Gokudera looked flustered and frustrated while he tried to pry Sawada off the ground. "Anyways, it's super disrespectful to have to ask for something like this! He's not going to say yes!"

"The fuck are you trash talking about?" Katsuki questioned with a scowl.

"I need a date." Sawada looked up and put his hands together in the position of a prayer. There was an expensive looking white envelope in his hand. "Please come with me to this rich guy's birthday party as Victoire!"

The blond took the envelope with two fingers and saw that it was a standard party invitation from some rich old man with ties to the Japanese yakuza and a lot of bigshots in the food business. While organized crime had diminished greatly in power due to the rise of All Might, a few of them still hung on to their traditions and found new angles to navigate in this age of heroes.

After all, there were some things where it was easier for the bad guys to handle instead of waiting for a hero to come around.

"Why can't you ask one of the girls you know?"

“Being in such a big crowd is too much pressure for Chrome and I can’t really ask civilians to come attend a mafia party with me.”

Ah, finally using his brain. Katsuki found it amusing that although Sawada acted like a wuss most of the time, he does actually care about the people around him and would put their feelings or safety into consideration. He stood up for them with...his *dying* will for the lack of a better description. It was admirable.

“Xanxus is going to maim you,” he mused while tossing the invitation back to Sawada.

“I know that.” Watery eyes and a large pout, the other teen dreaded over what would happen if Varia’s boss found out. “But if I don’t go, Reborn is going to maim me *now*. He said this is only a small party but it would be a good chance for me to practice. I don’t want to go! It sounds super scary! Like, what am I even supposed to talk about with all those successful business people? Bianchi is out of town and I can’t bring anyone other than Gokudera and a date either...”

Katsuki was pretty sure Reborn planned this. He knew that Sawada wouldn’t trouble his female friends because this was related to the mafia. Can’t exactly explain how he was the successor to the biggest criminal organization on earth to a bunch of normal middle school girls. But Sawada still needed a date and he would need someone who could help him navigate the unfamiliar social environment. Someone who wouldn’t be out of place and could keep him from embarrassing himself. Who better than the supermodel Victoire who had been attending social gatherings and parties with Xanxus?

To be honest, Katsuki didn’t like parties. He didn’t enjoy socializing or having to fake smiles at people he didn’t like. But he knew he needed the money and it was necessary. Mammon taught him how to pretend, how to act like a completely different person and manipulate a conversation. It was hard at first. Katsuki remembered wanting to curse and scream a lot. He wanted to slap a lot of people too.

Things got a bit better when he attended these things with Xanxus, people were too scared to come up to them.

Seeing Sawada freak out about having to attend a high end party reminded him of his past struggles. It was hard to do this alone. Sighing, Katsuki mentioned for Sawada to get up.

“If you’re going to be my partner for the night then the least you can do is not look like a spineless wuss. Vongola doesn’t kneel.”

Sawada looked like he could hug him but stopped himself when Katsuki glared at him. “Thank you so much!”

“Haha, I told you everything would be alright. Katsuki is a good guy!” Yamamoto patted Gokudera on the back, only to get elbowed in the gut but he didn’t seem to mind.

The silver haired teen took out a smoke while he glared at Katsuki, clearly not trusting him. It was good. At least *someone* in Sawada’s corner had a functional brain cell to remember to keep their guard up. He might be playing nice now but at the end of the day, he was still on Xanxus’s side.

Katsuki had gotten used to this group of oddballs slightly. They were loud and annoying but most of them had a sense of decency and knew how to respect privacy. If anything, the blond could tolerate them. It would be even better if that disciplinary committee jerk would stop fucking attack him everytime they ran into each other.

After that they started preparing for the party. Katsuki didn’t think he would have any problems but Sawada clearly needed pointers about these things since it would be his first time. They needed to get him sharpened up and at least make him more presentable. Sawada was going to represent Vongola and they couldn't tarnish its reputation.

Of course, Reborn got everything else in order already. The little shit prepared a tailored suit for Sawada *and* he even got a dress for Victoire. Katsuki wasn’t going to ask how the fuck Reborn got his measurements correct.

The suit for Sawada was a nice, expensive black one. While it was simple and traditional, it would be suitable for today’s occasion. The tie was orange, just like the dress Reborn got for Katsuki.

“This is witchcraft,” Gokudera deadpanned when Katsuki came out of the washroom. He was staring at the blond as if he saw an alien crawling out of the toilet.

The blond was wearing a slant shoulder orange dress that flowed down to the floor. Small pieces of sparkling diamonds and thin silver wires formed the shape of butterflies along his shoulder. An orange ribbon was wrapped around his throat and tied into a bow behind his neck. Dangling diamond earrings decorated his earlobes too. With a little makeup and minus the usual scowl on his face, he looked like a completely different gender. This was the supermodel Victoire and not UA’s hero in training.

“You look wonderful.” Yamamoto clapped while laughing. “Don’t you think so, Tsuna?”

“Oh-um-um…” Sawada stuttered while he fumbled with his tie.

“Man up and give your date for the night a proper compliment.” Reborn knocked him on the head with a rolled up newspaper but the crisp sound from it sounded more like Sawada got hit by a solid stick.

“Ow! Reborn!” Sawada yelped out in pain as he rubbed the back of his head. Hesitantly, he approached Katsuki and said, “Um…You look beautiful?”

“Don’t say it like a question. I’m hot and everyone knows it.” Katsuki pulled Sawada by his tie. Of course Victoire was popular with the crowd. She was the mainstream definition of young and pretty with her fair skin and exotic red eyes. “Embarrass me and I’m going to hang you from the roof of your school, we clear?”

Sawada nodded like his head was going to fall off.

The car was already waiting for them. Only Gokudera would be coming with them since he was the only one who grew up in a mafia environment and would understand these situations better. Yamamoto and the others might be Sawada’s guardians but they were still too young to be exposed to the rest of the underworld officially.

“Again, you’re despicable,” Katsuki hissed at the baby hitman with as much venom as he could muster when he passed by him.

“Noted.” Reborn raised his coffee cup towards the blond teen in a cheer. There was a shimmer of mischievous evil in his large dark eyes. “Not going to change but noted.”

Fucking little turd.

The future for yakuza in Japan was bleak.

Chisaki Kai knew that since he was taken in by the old boss of Shie Hassaikai. Organized crime started seeing its decline all over the world when the heroes rose up. Smaller gangs disbanded and the yakuza members declined over time. It was hard to find new blood when the police were constantly surveillancing them and every notable yakuza member had been profiled and labelled as a possible

villain organization. People didn't like the stigma and hero raids torn down many of the businesses controlled by the underground powers.

It was a slightly different story in other countries. Like Italy for example, from what Chisaki gathered the mafia still had a strong hold on society. They were feared and respected. Unlike the Japanese yakuza who had to go into hiding and keep constant watch over their shoulders, the Italian mafia waltzed around with their champagnes and expense suits. They were the real owners of the night and the emperor that stood above them all was Vongola.

The one who owned Vongola basically controlled all of the globe's underworld.

But that was too far-fetched for him right now. Shie Hassaikai was only starting to receive some overdue recognition and his little project required a lot more time and money.

He tugged his white gloves up, making sure they fit him properly and soothed out any wrinkles on his suit. Shie Hassaikai had been invited to the birthday party of the owner of a food corporate giant. The man was old friends with the old boss and since the old man was out of commission for now, Chisaki came in his place. There were other yakuza members here tonight along with the food giant's normal business partners. It was a grand party held in a five star hotel, crowds mingled in the ballroom down below while the waiters moved around offering drinks to the guests.

"Overhaul, you alright?" his right hand man asked. Chronostasis wasn't in his white raincoat and plague doctor mask since this was an event that required them to dress up. They couldn't have other people thinking Shie Hassaikai was dirt poor or had no class. The young man was in a dark suit and his pale hair with a greyish tint was combed back.

"I'm fine." He knew that tonight was important. Chisaki had switched his beak mask into a normal medical black one. He too was in an iron pressed suit and he leaned against the pillar as he looked down into the ballroom.

Ladies in lavish dresses, gentlemen in their nice suits...it was a repulsive place. Chisaki didn't like the smell of cologne mixed with perfume or how people shook hands with one another all around. They were all sick. This society was sick and unclean.

At least the place looked decently clean. He found a little bit of

comfort in the polished floors and bright lights. He was here out of respect for the old man and to continue their connection with the host of this party. Chisaki was also keeping an eye out for possible sponsors. It was a little trickier since he obviously couldn't intimidate these people into working with them but if he could score one or two of them, then they would have enough funds to see through until the end of the year.

So he entered the floor too. Chronostasis was behind him as he conversed with the wealthy pigs. They were disgusting in his opinion. Their talks about heroes and their sweaty hands...everything made Chisaki's nerves tightened to the point of near snapping. It was taking everything in him to not kill anybody.

A small commotion broke out near the entrance. Chisaki's gaze followed the source of the noise and he saw three teenagers coming in. There was a silver haired one who was slightly taller than the other two and he walked about two paces behind, probably a bodyguard. He was also wearing a plain white mask.The girl looked familiar. She might be a model or an actress but Chisaki wasn't sure. The blond teenage girl wore an orange dress that suited her age. The colours popped energetically against her fair skin while the pattern of butterflies decorated her toned frame. She was the only one out of the three not wearing a mask and Chisaki supposed she did look aesthetically pleasing, with a petite nose, long eyelashes, and alluring scarlet eyes. Her short hair was a pale blond colour and it was spiky, giving her overall appearance a kind of youthful feist.

The last person was someone Chisaki had no memory of. He knew most of the yakuza elites still operating in Japan and he did his homework on the other normal guests that would be invited tonight. He doesn't remember anyone that suited the teen's description.

He wasn't very big or had any intimidating presence. The teen was in a dark suit that didn't stand out and he had a mess of brown hair. A larger dark coat was draped over his shoulders and it was held together by a golden chained brooch. His tie matched the girl's dress and he sported a silver and black mask that covered the upper half of his face.

The girl had her hand hooked around his elbow.

"That's the candidate for Vongola Decimo, isn't it?"

Quiet conversations passed around the room.

“I thought the candidate had dark hair and was already of age.”

“That’s the other one. There’s two of them.”

Chisaki silently retreated to the back of the room, to better observe and listen in on the conversations going around. Shie Hassaikai was based in Japan and more local. The old man hadn’t thought about expanding with all the heroes patrolling around so their information on global criminal syndicates were a little lacking.

No one approached the trio at first. They were hesitant. Maybe that was out of fear? Chisaki couldn’t be sure. The host of the party came to greet them and he seemed overjoyed that *Vongola* was here. They made small talk but Chisaki supposed the host wasn’t of important enough caliber, otherwise it wouldn’t be the girl holding most of the conversation with him.

Or maybe, the candidate for Vongola Decimo was an idiot who let his girl walk over him. If that was the case, Chisaki started pondering if he could persuade the teen into investing in his business. Vongola had to be loaded and anything that leaked through the cracks between their fingers would be enough to sustain a small organization for months.

“That’s Victoire…Isn’t she dating Xanxus?”

Chisaki heard some of the women whispering to each other. He didn’t know who Xanxus was.

“I thought so too. Oh my, don’t tell me she’s going after *both* candidates.”

Problem solved. Xanxus must be the other contender for the spot of the Tenth. The older one.

“Well, this one looks like he’s easier to control than Xanxus. Wouldn’t be surprised if she tries to snare him.”

“Do you think Xanxus knows?”

“Who knows? I wouldn’t want to be him if he lost both the Tenth’s position and his lady to a middle schooler.”

That was enough intel for Chisaki. Vongola itself wasn’t all that united as it appeared. There were two possible successors who were at odds with each other and between them was a gold digger looking to

become the wife of Vongola Decimo. Nothing new.

The rest of the party was relatively uneventful. The host cut his giant cake, offered everybody more alcohol and there was a mountain of gifts. Chisaki had been studying the Vongola trio for a decent half of the night. They looked normal. The silver haired one was composed and alert, fitting for a subordinate who had to be on guard and ready to protect his superior. The girl seemed to be well suited for socializing and parties but not a lot of people went up to talk to her because of the cold and high and mighty aura she gave off.

The only one that was slightly out of place was the Vongola Decimo candidate. People in the ballroom referred to him as Vongola only since his identity was being kept a secret. He wasn't like the other candidate, who was born and raised in Italy. This one was the lost descent from Vongola Primo's bloodline and raised here in Japan. Of course Vongola Nono would be taking precautions to protect him after what happened to the other three heirs.

Chisaki was unimpressed. Vongola looked too relaxed in his opinion, leaving too many openings for possible attacks that it was shameful. Or perhaps that was intentional. The bodyguard behind him couldn't be for show only could he? Also, Chisaki had heard that Vongola Nono himself didn't look intimidating either. A falsified front to deceive his enemies.

Nonetheless, he saw an opportunity when Vongola stepped out into the garden for some fresh air.

"It must be tiring to entertain all those people," he said as he approached the teen.

"Yeah..." the brown haired teen started answering but then caught himself. "Um, I'm sorry but you are…?"

"Chisaki Kai from Shie Hassaikai, pleasure to make your acquaintance. We're a small organization, it's completely understandable if you don't know us." Chisaki could be courteous and polite when he wanted to. He would do anything in order to restore the yakuza to its former glory. These big shots might look down upon them or ignore them now but he would make sure they never forget about Shie Hassaikai as soon as his product was complete. "You're much younger than I expected."

"...So I've heard from a lot of people tonight."

Vongola wasn't a very talkative person then. Chisaki could see the teen before him and seemed uncomfortable with conversing. He was inexperienced in socializing then. Perfect.

"The old fools in there liked to judge people based on appearance. It's conditioned by society,"
Chisaki said simply while he assessed the other's reaction. "It's like those heroes. People praise them but in reality they are not as clean as the media portrayed them to be either. They are copy and paste role model images shaped by propaganda."

The teen scratched his head sheepishly. "I'm not sure about that. I never paid the heroes much attention. They just seemed quite...irrelevant, I guess?"

That was blatant ignorance. Chisaki silently gritted his teeth. While them "lower" villains were barely scraping by, these "high end" mafia could blatantly ignore the law and not worry about repercussions.

One touch. He just needed one touch to get Vongola to cooperate with him. He was about to place an ungloved hand on the teen's shoulder when he heard the sound of heels clicking against the ground.

"There you are, Honey!" The blond girl turned around the corner and her smile brightened. She pressed herself into the brown haired teen's side and pouted. "How could you leave me alone on the dance floor? They were playing such a nice song too!"

Vongola blushed and his body stiffened. "I'm sorry."

"I'll forgive you if you go fetch me something to drink."

Chisaki was already having a headache. Victoire was just like the typical spoiled rich girl portrayed in television. Blonde, pretty, and *very* demanding. He had no idea why men liked this type of woman so much. In his opinion, this wasn't the kind of lady that was fitted to be standing next to a crime lord. Too brainless and whiny, expecting everyone to cater to her taste just because she had a pretty face. They were nothing but house pets that could barely be used as pawns in the game.

These Vongola men had no taste.

The brown haired teen went off, which meant Chisaki's further plans were ruined. But he wasn't discouraged since he didn't expect much from it in the first place.

“You two make a lovely young couple,” he complimented. These types of girls were easy. A few compliments and they would start spilling secrets.

“Oh?” Victoire opened her fan made of orange lace and fine silver, a chain ending with a diamond dangled from the handle. Her eyes scanned him lazily, as if she was intrigued by him. “How kind of you to think so. I must thank you for entertaining my dear partner for the night. He’s not much of a party type of guy.”

“What would he be interested in then?”

The fan snapped close and Chisaki felt its tip tapped against his mask, where his lips were supposed to be. But the sensation was gone just as fast, almost like it was simply his imagination and his body wasn’t fully sure if it should be developing an allergic reaction.

Victoire opened her fan again, hiding the lower portion of her face behind it as she laughed.

“Careful, Mister.” She was smiling evilly behind that fan, this Chisaki was sure of. “Impatience is a mortal flaw. Now, it was nice chatting with you but I must take my leave.”

She moved past him without looking back. Chisaki’s expression darkened and the fake warmth in his eyes vanished in an instant. Chronostasis came out from behind the tree not far away and gasped.

“Overhaul, your neck!”

Chisaki wiped his thumb over his throat and narrowed his eyes when he saw the red on his white gloves. A rash broke out on his skin as he realized that he had been cut. “How bad is it?”

“...It’s faint, thinner than a strand of hair.”

Meaning that it wasn’t a serious wound. But he hadn’t seen the attack coming and he didn’t feel the pain. If his attacker wanted, he would have been beheaded by now. Clenching his fist by his side, he knew this was a warning. They don’t care if a dead body turned up at a party. No one would bother standing up for an organization they barely heard of and the host certainly won’t get riled up against Vongola for this. Hell, he might use it as an opportunity to gain some small favors and forget about Shie Hassaikai just as fast. That was how far Vongola’s grasp could reach.

“If you can’t keep your paws to yourself, Vongola will cut it off for you.”

That was what the girl whispered when she passed by him. She must have seen through what he wanted to do. Victoire wasn’t talking about the Decimo candidate. She was talking about Vongola as a whole.

There would be hell to pay if he ever dared to touch a single hair on their successor’s head.

He took back what he said about the model being brainless. That was no tamed kitty or domesticated pet.

She was a goddamn witch and she was *Vongola*.

2

The final exam was a fucking dumpsterfire.

Katsuki had to pair up with Midoriya. To be fair, he almost forgot the green haired teen was in his life. It wasn’t until he saw Midoriya walk through the classroom doors on the first day of high school that he remembered he had a childhood friend. He still doesn’t like Deku. Katsuki got a sense that the feeling was mutual since Midoriya seemed to have made annoying the hell out of him his lifelong mission.

The muttering and the creepy habit of writing everything in his notes didn’t change. Katsuki doesn’t really care though. He could shake Midoriya if he tailed him easily and it didn’t really matter what he wrote in those notes. It wasn’t like the nerd could pinpoint any evidence of his mafia connections anyways.

Still, sometimes Katsuki was confused by the...he wasn’t sure if he could call it this but there was an *intensity* in those large green eyes when they looked at him. It wasn’t necessarily hatred but he can’t pinpoint what it was either. Maybe it was rivalry? They came from the same school and were both striving for the No.1 hero spot so that would make sense. It would also explain why Midoriya was always getting in his way.

Honestly, Katsuki didn’t know what he did to tick off Midoriya so much since he literally didn’t speak a single word to the guy during their three years of middle school.

The idiot wanted to run. Katsuki thought that was a stupid move. There was no rule saying the “villain” can’t attack them first. If All

Might wanted, he could also just wait by the exit and they would have to fight him eventually. Running doesn't solve anything since there was only one exit.

They narrowly passed the finals. It wasn't a stellar win that Katsuki would be proud of but at least it wasn't a fail. Their relationship didn't improve and honestly, the blond didn't see the point in why his teachers thought he needed to get along with Midoriya. Plenty of people who hate each other's guts could still work together and so long as they got the job done, who gave a fuck about anything else?

Who's to say being on good terms was a guarantee of violence free anyways? It was not like it'd be the first time Bel tried to stab him on a mission or anything. And they actually liked each other! Belphegor was kind of like a brother Katsuki never got. They were similar in age and Bel wasn't like the lackeys that followed him around when he was younger. He had opinions and a lot of them. He wanted to lead just as much as Katsuki. They often went head to head in things but at the end of the day, Katsuki would still let the shitty prince guard his back in combat.

He also found All Might's blatant favouritism towards Midoriya distasteful. Both of them sucked at being subtle and Katsuki was too busy to give a fuck. He wasn't going to spend a single minute trying to piece together why Midoriya of all people got All Might's attention.

Reborn was a fucking piece of shit but also a good mentor. He hadn't slacked off on his promise of making Katsuki stronger and added in his usual homework, model job, and training, Katsuki didn't have any time for drama.

"Katsuki."

The blond whipped his head around to see his father coming close. When was the last time he saw either of his parents again? A week ago or maybe it was a month ago? He lost count already.

To be honest, he didn't hold a strong grudge against his parents. He knew they were busy and he doesn't blame them for putting their careers first. It would be better if they don't half ass the neglect. Like sometimes when they started being all sweet and nice to him he would get suspicious. Did they want something from him? They only talked to him that way when he could benefit them somehow. Or maybe it would be one of those spontaneous moments where they tried to reenact some kind of family bonding and to remind him to not

embarrass them when he was out in public.

“How are you doing, son? We haven’t gotten a lot of chances to talk lately.”

Soft words and a hesitated smile. Same old. Same old.

“It’s been fine.” Katsuki shrugged.

Silence fell upon them and he could see his father trying to come up with something to continue the conversation. His old man wasn’t a bad guy. He had been nothing but kind and gentle but that was all he was.

He was a coward.

The man never fought his wife face on in anything other than what coloured fabric a new design should use. His whispers and pleas never stopped the shouting in this house and he was shitty when it came to confrontations. The man buried himself in work when shit got bad and a closed door or “please listen to your mother” were all Katsuki ever got from him in the bad times. Maybe when he was younger his father bothered to hand him a first aid kit but as he grew up that stopped too.

That was fine. Katsuki never expected to find protection from his father anyways. His father was simply too soft.

Katsuki had no plans of sticking around in this house for a second more than he had to. He was going to graduate and become a hero overseas. Hero licenses were transferable between nations with some additional testing and he knew he would be guaranteed a spot in Italy, where he would be closer to Xanxus, to Varia.

They were family.

Sighing, he passed Masaru the information he got from school. “I’m going on a camping trip this summer with the school.”

“That sounds great!” There was a smile but it was stiff, like an act. Like the man didn’t know what to do in these situations. He wouldn’t know. He barely made it to any of Katsuki’s school events over the years. Fuck it, *Levi* probably knew more about Katsuki’s life than Masaru did.

Now that was just pathetic.

“Yeah, really looking forward to it.”

Because when the summer was over, he would be closer to getting out of here.

Katsuki spent the two week leading up to the training camp with Xanxus. He got fucked real hard and rough his first night there. Sounded like Xanxus found out about Victoire attending a party with Sawada Tsunayoshi.

And Xanxus wasn’t pleased at all.

The blond teen got railed until he felt like his legs weren’t his any more. He was beyond overstimulated, none of his muscles felt like they were his any longer as he got pinned between the bed and Xanxus. His insides felt like a hot mess and the portions of his skin that Xanxus touched felt like they had been set on fire. Spasming against his will, he couldn’t even cry out when he came dry. His cock was limp between his tired legs while Xanxus unloaded inside him, filling him up.

“I’m going to shoot Sawada in the head the next time I see him,” Xanxus growled against the blond’s ear.

To be fair, Katsuki was so far gone at that point that Xanxus could say he was going to shoot All Might and he wouldn’t give a dime. The only thing he did was arched his neck, searching for a kiss.

They had a few dates throughout the week. A nice brunch at a good restaurant, a short stroll down the street, and one morning Katsuki even managed to drag the man out of bed early enough for him to drive them to the beach in one of his sports cars that he rarely used. Since neither of them liked crowds much, they didn’t spend a lot of time there but it was still more than enough for Katsuki…this *totally* had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that they might or might not have banged in the car.

Katsuki had his usual dagger throwing contest with Bel, got ordered around by Mammon to earn more money, finished some of Suqalo’s work for him (he looked like he could use the rest), cooked with Lussuria, and terrorized the rest of Varia with Levi’s training from hell. Living with Varia was loud and chaotic, with a lot of dangerous objects being thrown around but he loved it.

On his last day, he spent the last few hours he had with Xanxus in the garden. Varia's garden was generic, nothing too fancy or exotic since it would probably be destroyed soon. They were sitting in one of those egg shaped vine swings with padded cushions, with Katsuki on Xanxus's lap.

He leaned into his boyfriend's chest and enjoyed the soft serene sounds of the garden. The birds were chirping and the faint rustling of the leaves were calming. He wished he could spend more time here but his parents would be home soon and he actually had a packed schedule for the summer.

"Remember who you belong to," Xanxus said without looking at him when their time was almost up.

"Yours," Katsuki replied without missing a beat. It was sort of embarrassing, the syllables made his tongue tingle and a blush formed on his cheeks. "And only yours."

He might not be the man's cloud officially in name but they all knew Xanxus was his sky. There was a bond between them. A strong connection and resonation that no one else could replicate.

There was an almost nonexistent twitch of a smile making its way onto Xanxus's lips as they shared a kiss. It was a sweet one, soft and prolonged, and made him feel like he could melt under it instantly.

Katsuki's good mood lasted even when he saw Midoriya greet him in front of the school bus. The green haired teen was still nervous and skittish like usual. Somehow those properties were slightly more tolerable on Sawada. Oh, maybe that was because Sawada would never harass him like Midoriya with his constant disapproving stare at everything Katsuki did or over analyze things. Whatever, it wasn't like Midoriya was doing it out of ill intentions.

He was just a fucking weird nerd.

Their classmates were all packing suitcases and they loaded onto the bus one by one.

"Bakubro! How was your break?" Kirishima asked energetically as he patted Katsuki on the shoulder. "You seem busy even though it's the summer break."

He was busy, busy getting his brains fucked out and trying to stab a shitty prince or a few low ranking Varia members. The latter were

easy targets.

“I don’t slack off like you shitheads,” he said instead.

“Aw, come on. Don’t be so hard on us or yourself. Having some fun once in a while won’t kill you.”

He sure as hell felt like he was going to die when he had a round with Xanxus in the showers. Not that any of his classmates needed to know that information.

The bus ride to their campground was a noisy one as expected. Katsuki tuned most of it out, just enjoying the scenery outside. It looked like they were being taken somewhere deep in the mountains.

“Bakugou!” Raccoon eyes flopped down next to him suddenly. She had a bag of opened cookies and was passing it around. “I have a question for you!”

She looked too excited for it to be anything good.

“What?” he grumbled.

There was a wild grin on the girl’s face.

“What’s your type?”

“My what?”

“Mina, you’re asking the wrong person!” Kaminari shouted from his spot. “Bakugou doesn’t do romance!”

“Shh! I’m trying to get him to answer!” she yelled back. Katsuki would probably laugh if she wasn’t treating him as if she would treat a cornered rabid animal.

“This is stupid.” Katsuki felt like pulling his jacket over his head and taking a nap.

“Bakugou, please~” Mina shook him and even offered to bribe him with a bag of spicy chips. “Come on, be honest too. Even Todoroki answered.”

“He did?” That was a surprise. Katsuki didn’t think the heterochromatic bastard would have a single romantical cell in his body. Not when he was too busy dealing with his family issues and internal conflicts.

Mina nodded. “He said someone kind with a strong will.”

A generic answer. Katsuki yawned. He didn’t really have an obligation to answer but the pink haired girl in front of him was staring at him so intensely that he knew if she didn’t get an answer she wouldn't leave him alone. He pushed her away but took the chips and stuffed the bag in his backpack that he kept under his seat.

“Smart,” he started as he placed a hand on his chin. A small smirk formed on his lips as he thought about the boss of Varia. “Good looking, strong, and doesn’t take any bullshit from anyone. Authoritative but got enough brains to listen to reason from time to time. It’s alright if he’s hot tempered or crude so long as he gets the job done.”

Silence fell upon the bus. Katsuki silently rolled his eyes because of course all the other idiots were listening in.

“...Bakugou, you just described yourself.” Mina gave him a strange look.

“No, I described my type like you asked.” And he had a very *specific* one.

Sero poked his head up from behind the bus seat. “But what you described is basically YOU!”

“Bakugou’s a narcissist. Honestly not surprised.” Kaminair laughed as he threw a box of Pocky at the blond.

Katsuki tossed it in a random direction and it landed in Shouji’s lap, who handed it off to Sato. “I don’t eat junk.”

If he wanted chocolate, he was getting the branded ones from Europe. That was the benefit of being a supermodel and dating a super picky eater like Xanxus.

“I feel like you’re dodging my question and don’t deserve my chips.” Mina pouted.

“I don’t care what you think. I gave an honest answer.”

“Honest...” Hagakure looked down the aisle (or at least Katsuki thought she did judging from where her sleeves were placed). “You used ‘he’ in your honest answer. Does that mean you are gay?”

“Toru!” Jirou grabbed her nervously. That was a pretty straightforward and private question. They have been in the same class with Katsuki for long enough to pick up that he was a really private person. Katsuki didn’t like his pictures being taken, didn't talk much about his homelife or what he does on weekends, and he certainly didn’t have an interest in joining in on heart to hearts.

To her surprise, Katsuki didn’t immediately blow up on them.

“Yeah, I like guys.” The blond didn’t see any reason to be self conscious or ashamed of it. It wasn’t that big of a deal. People were attracted to a lot of weirder shit. For instance, Lussuria liked them dead. “What? You punks got a problem with it?”

His classmates shook their heads in unison, still in shock.

“That’s...really manly for you to admit, Bakugou.” Kirishima came over and patted Katsuki’s shoulder. “You’ve got guts to say that so confidently.”

Japan was still a bit backwards in terms of these things. While the stereotypes and stigma have lessened over the years, a portion of the older generation still held onto their more conservative views and viewed these relationships with scorn.

“I happen to prefer dicks, get over it. It’s not a big deal.” He also liked wearing dainty dresses but he had a feeling if his classmates knew they would go into hyperventilation and this bus might need to take a detour to the hospital.

“That’s one less competition for us,” Mineta said under his breath but since they were in an enclosed space, all of them heard him. He also muttered something about guys with nice faces getting all the girls but everyone just proceeded to ignore him.

The class resumed their laughter and jokes about other stuff. They left Katsuki alone after he expressed his dislike of being surrounded by a crowd. For some reason, the shitty nerd had been awfully quiet since the little reveal but Katsuki didn’t think too much of it. He could see a patch of clearing coming up ahead and the bus came to a stop. There were already a smaller car and a few costumed figures standing there.

Aizawa told them to get out for some fresh air.

Katsuki suddenly had a bad feeling about this.

Chapter End Notes

Next up: The kidnapping :)

Also, I kind of just realized Eri could pass off as Squalo and Katsuki's lovechild...um, don't know what I'm going to do with that knowledge yet

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Aizawa was a dick.

Katsuki couldn't believe the asshole let his students *get pushed off a cliff*. He'd expect this type of behavior from Reborn but *Aizawa*? Heroes were supposed to be the nice ones weren't they?

Everything hurted. Katsuki rubbed his wrists while he spat dust and dirt out from his mouth. Continuously using his explosions against solid rocks and running for hours took a toll on his body. He still had some juice left in the tank but he really would rather just sit down and rest.

They arrived at their actual training camp as the sun was setting. The sky was painted orange and Katsuki felt like the birds flying above were mocking them as they returned to their nests. He would have gotten here sooner but he couldn't just leave the other extras. Some of them don't have quirks suitable to go on the offense and navigating through a forest wasn't an easy task by itself.

This was another ploy to force them all to work together. Katsuki was sure of it. If there was a score board, he was sure that ditching his classmates would get him another lecture from their hobo teacher.

"I need a shower," Mina complained loudly. "I think I have dirt and pebbles in my socks."

"Food first. So...hungry..." Kirishima groaned and his skin was dirty and pink, almost like they had been scrubbed raw in the dirt. Behind him, Sero was dragging along Kaminari, whose brain was simply fried and drool came out the side of his mouth. The rest of the class were all in drained, gross, sweaty, and almost at their limits too.

Training was hell.

It was a different kind of hell from Reborn's tortures.

Katsuki could feel the exertion eating away at his muscles from the

inside out. He smelled smoke, the familiar burnt sugar scent hung to his clothing and his sweat seemed to be tainted by ashes and soot. There were painful groans and screaming around him. Both class A and B were suffering together under the pro heroes' supervision.

For dinner, they had to make their own food. The members of Pussy Cats brought out piles of fresh produce and cooking utensils. While the rest of them were scrambling around, Katsuki scanned the leftover ingredients.

Picking up the knife again, his mind wandered off. He already told Xanxus and everyone else in Varia that he would be out of touch for the duration of the training camp. Katsuki wasn't dumb enough to be contacting a group of assassins while one a UA field trip. They had to change location last minute due to possible threat from villains, if he contacted the mafia now it would probably look like he was leaking intel with the criminals planning on attacking them.

"What are you making, Bakugou?" Kaminari poked his head over to peer over Bakugou's shoulder. He smelled something wonderful mixed in the heavy scent of curry that was in the air. "Soup?"

There was a pot of creamy white soup boiling in front of the explosive blond. It smelled rich with the scent of herbs and spices.

"Shut up and grab the bowls," Katsuki said while he added a few finishing touches. The other blond teen didn't need him to say it twice before he passed over a stack of bowls. The rest of the self designated Bakusquad also squealed in excitement and gathered around.

"Bakugou, this is delicious!" Kirishima complimented with a wide smile after he had his first spoonful of soup. He didn't have a big enough vocabulary list to describe how great it was. All he knew was that it was the best soup he ever had.

Mina nodded along. "So good!"

"I didn't know you were this good at cooking." Sero ate slower, savoring the rich starchy texture on his tongue as the soup warmed him from the inside.

Kaminari was too busy stuffing his face to talk but he gave Katsuki a thumbs up. Katsuki smirked. He knew he was good at cooking. Xanxus was a picky eater and the rest of the Varia high command were all used to having quality meals. They wouldn't touch his stuff if it wasn't any good. Filling another bowl, he sat down to eat. It tasted slightly

different from how the Varia chef taught him but it can't be helped when he was missing a few spices.

"You've got hands, serve yourselves." he said without looking up. He could feel the heated stares on his back. As soon as the last word rolled off his tongue, he heard giggles and cheers while the rest of the class rushed over to his pot. Iida was saying something about getting their fill in an orderly fashion but eventually, everyone got a bowl. They were all curious about Bakugou's cooking.

"It's really delicious," Hagakure said. "I wonder what it's called."

"This isn't a Japanese dish, that's for sure." Sato was more of a bakery guy himself but he wasn't unfamiliar with cooking either.

"It's Italian," Yaoyorozu answered as she blew on her spoon to cool the hot soup down. "I can't remember what it's called but I had this dish on a family vacation before."

Coming from a wealthy family, of course she would have access to the finest cuisines in the world. But she still enjoyed the campsite curry and soup very much too.

They thanked Bakugou for the soup. Since a semester had passed, they had figured out a few ways of how to deal with him. His usual foul language and nicknames didn't contain malice and while he looked intimidating at first glance, he generally kept to himself so long as no one provoked him. Bakugou was quite busy too since he was usually the first out of the door once school was over. According to Kirishima, Bakugou said he was tutoring some middle school kid.

Katsuki spared them a glance and shrugged. "Whatever, just clean up your own messes."

The rest of the night went by alright. Mineta hadn't given up on "seeing the light" but the teachers knew it already and they set a different time for when the girls could enjoy the hot spring. When Mineta climbed over this time, he saw class B's boys instead. According to him, his spirit was crushed and his eyes tainted by filth.

The third day was the same gruelling training all over again. Katsuki was still moving around purely motivated by spite and stubbornness. The only good thing about the whole thing was that his noisy classmates didn't have the energy to come pester him with jokes either.

When night time rolled around, they were going to have a test of courage in the forest. The two classes had to scare each other. Katsuki got paired with Ice Hot, which he wasn't happy about but was still alright with. It was better than Deku, who couldn't meet Katsuki's eye more than usual for some odd reason.

Katsuki summed it up to the nerd being weird again.

They entered the forest.

Katsuki wasn't one for chitchat and Todoroki was the silent type too so the walk was quiet. It wasn't bad, while it was dark the sound of the forest was serene. Crickets and bugs, a few nocturnal birds, a light breeze swept by and the leaves rustled...it was good and relaxing. They ran into a few of the scares that class B had prepared. Everything was smooth sailing until they got to the halfway point. The pro hero Ragdoll was stationed there and they were supposed to get a name plate from her to show that they completed the trip.

But when they got there, the woman was talking to a few people already. Katsuki saw the emerald green of the pro hero's long hair first. And then he heard familiar voices. The blond teen *almost* face palmed.

Fucking hell.

He knew this trip was going way too smoothly.

Todoroki Shouto had been through a few changes since he entered highschool. After his battle with Midoriya during the Sports Festival, he had been slowly opening up to those around him. While he was still determined to become a great hero who could surpass his father and All Might, he also started noticing things around him and interacting with others more freely.

He enjoyed having lunch with Iida, Midoriya, and Uraraka. Working and talking with Yaoyorozu was delightful too. Todoroki wasn't good at social interactions but his classmates were understanding of it. He never realized that school life could be so much more entertaining and fun when he stopped focusing all his attention on his hatred for Endeavor.

He also realized that there was more to everyone's lives than meets the eyes. Kirishima wasn't always so happy-go-luck and extroverted.

Kaminari actually had a wicked taste in movies. Orjiro's knowledge of martial arts was impressive for a kid this age without any professional guidance.

Todoroki slowly found himself integrating into the class. They talked about homework and training, planned outings together, and discussed the news on a variety of topics. While most of the time he just listened, he enjoyed watching the smiles on his classmates' faces while they raved about teenage things like models or the latest video games.

However, there was someone whom he was having a hard time figuring out.

Bakugou Katsuki.

At the beginning of the year, Todoroki disliked the blond immediately because he reminded him too much of Endeavor with that attitude of his. He was power hungry and cared very little for those around him, throwing insults around and self isolating. But after Todoroki did his own observing, it became clear that Bakugou wasn't all that much similar to his father. While the blond cussed, he hadn't laid a hand on another student outside of training. He tutored Kirishima and the others, nagged at them for the stupidest of things but picked up the slack if anyone needed help. Not to mention, Bakugou beat him in a fight *without* using his quirk.

It was funny now that he thought about it. He had been so hung up on winning only with his ice while Endeavor took pride in his fire. Endeavor spent countless hours drilling into him and training him to master his quirk in order to surpass All Might but Bakugou took him out *without* a quirk.

The look on Endeavor's face that night had been priceless.

Todoroki doesn't even mind the extra physical training on the weekends.

Tonight, it looked like he was learning something else about Bakugou. They had gotten to the midway point of the test of courage and Ragdoll was supposed to give them a card showing they made it here. However, when they approached the table, the prohero was still busy talking to a group of teenagers who looked about similar in age to them. Maybe a year or two younger.

"Sawada?" Bakugou asked out loud, causing everyone to turn around

and look at him.

There were three teenagers standing around the halfway point table with Ragdoll. One with silver hair and was dressed like a complete emo delinquent. He had multiple silver rings on each finger and wore a dark jacket while an unlit cigarette was placed between his mouth. Emerald eyes glared at Todoroki when their gazes met. The other teen was slightly taller, with short dark hair and an easy smile but he looked athletic. He was carrying what looked like a kendo sword wrapped in fabric and he slung it over his shoulder. As for the last person...he was the shortest of the trio. Scrawny and with his shoulders slightly hunched, the brunet had a timid air around him as his brown eyes went wide.

“Bakugou-kun?” he yelped in surprise.

Bakugou stomped over with a scowl on his face. “What the hell are you idiots doing here?”

“We’re camping,” the delinquent answered gruffly. “Was doing a test of courage but then we ran into her.”

He pointed to the hero.

“There shouldn’t be any campsites around here.” Ragdoll was suspicious and Todoroki doesn’t blame her. They had encountered too many villain attacks during the school year. “And you know Bakugou? Bakugou, did you contact anyone after you arrived at the camp?”

There was a deadly seriousness in her stern voice.

“He’s my Italian tutor,” Sawada replied first, the words tumbling out of his mouth like an unstoppable waterfall. “We didn’t know UA would be having the training camp here. A friend of ours has a cabin back that way and he said we could use it. The trip was set up before the semester ended too.”

Ragdoll looked like she was in thought or maybe she was communicating with Mandalay, the telepathic pro hero.

“Reborn?” Bakugou questioned Sawada quietly with an arched eyebrow. Whoever this Reborn was, it was clear as day that Bakugou didn’t like him.

Sawada gave him a grave nod. “Reborn.”

“Fuck him.”

“I wish I could say the same but if I do he might double my homework.”

“Fuck Reborn,” Bakugou spat. He said it extra loud too. “There, I said it for you.”

Sawada gave him a thumbs up with a small smile.

“It’s confirmed that there is a cabin over there but that place is owned by a foreigner who doesn’t visit Japan often.” Ragdoll turned back to them. Her eyes, which were large and round, scanned the teenagers before nodding. “We’re going to have to ask you to keep quiet about seeing the UA students here. Their location needs to remain confidential. Is there an adult with your group? We will need to talk to them too.”

“Adult…oh um, that might be a little…hard to do?” Sawada suddenly got very hesitant. “You see, we came with my home tutor and Dino-san, the person who owns the cabin. But Dino-san got a work emergency he had to take care of so he left this afternoon, he’d be back tomorrow night.”

“We can talk to your tutor then. Unless there is also a problem?” When the teens shook their heads reluctantly, Ragdoll turned to Bakugou and Todoroki. “Can you two escort them back to the facility? Aizawa and Mandalay would like to talk to them.”

The whole trail for the test of courage was only about a 15 minutes walk so they all nodded. Bakugou also vouched that these three were just normal middle schoolers and not villains in disguise. The silver haired one, Gokudera, seemed to take offense in being called a villain very much. He had a disrespect for authority judging from how he argued with Ragdoll and he was just as foul-mouthed as Bakugou.

“Why do we have to talk to heroes when we are just minding our business? She was basically interrogating us back there!”

“Shut the fuck up, Octopus Head. You idiots are at the wrong place at the wrong time. Of course they are suspicious of you. Cavallone couldn’t have taken you all to a different damn forest?”

The two bickered back and forth all the way. Sawada tried to stop them but to no avail and the other guy was just too laid back that he didn’t care much about the tension at all.

None of them expected to be attacked by *actual* villains.

Purple smoke and eerie blue flames lit up the night sky. The disgusting smell filled their nostrils and Todoroki was carrying one of the boys from class B on his back. He had caught a whiff of the fog and dropped. The gas was poisonous. None of them knew what was happening but they all knew they needed to run. Todoroki knew they needed to get back to where their teachers were. They have three civilians with them and an unconscious schoolmate. It was best they avoid fighting villains.

Too bad luck wasn't on their side tonight.

"We have discovered one of the villain's targets! It is one of the students—Kacchan!"

"Fucking hell!" Bakugou cussed. "Why the fuck are these bastards after me?"

"You can't fight. Don't charge in recklessly." Ice shot out from beneath Todoroki's foot and formed a wall of ice in front of them, blocking the sharp teeth coming at them. They had ran into a villain who was locked in a black leather stripjacket but his mouth was held open with leather and metal straps, allowing him free use of his quirk.

He doesn't know how long he could hold out with just his ice. The dozen of razor sharp teeth could change directions and extend, attacking them from odd angles. But using fire in a forest was too dangerous.

"Let us help then," the dark haired teen, who introduced himself as Yamamoto said. He had been calmer than Todoroki expected. In fact, all three of the civilians had kept it mostly together (besides Sawada's muttering of "this is bad").

"No, it's too dangerous." Even them, who had training were having a hard time, it wasn't safe to let normal people enter a battle. "You can't use your quirks—"

"If it's not a quirk then we are fine!" Yamamoto seemed to have misunderstood him as he unwrapped the fabric covering his sword. It was a bamboo one, the kind used for kendo practice.

Todoroki looked stunned and confused. There was no way that Yamamoto was going to fight a villain with that, could he? "That's not going to work on—"

The rest of his sentences vanished when he saw Yamamoto sliced down and the bamboo sword turned into a real katana, deflecting the teeth that attacked him. Was that his quirk? No, it didn't look like a quirk was activated.

A hand landed on Todoroki's shoulder.

"Give me this guy and you go help the Baseball Idiot," Gokudera ordered, his eyes gleaming with cold and sharp feeling. "Your ice is better for defense."

Todoroki didn't question it. He would be able to react quicker without the weight on his back. Yamamoto was holding his own against a villain who obviously had experience in battle. The villain made use of the terrain to his advantage. Somehow, with a single sword in his hands, Yamamoto had sliced off a few of the teeths. He felt like a different person. The mellowed cheerful attitude was replaced by a serious air as he stared at the villain intensely, anticipating the next attack.

Whatever sword style the teen trained in, he was good at it.

"Octopus Head!" Bakugou yelled.

"I'm fine!" Gokudera ducked again, narrowly missing a brush with the teeth. "You protect the Te—Tsuna!"

Bakugou retreated to stand close to the brown haired teen. "Sawada, who else came with you?"

"Hibari-senpai and Big Bro are also here. They were supposed to enter the forest after us. The kids are with Bianchi and Reborn back at the house."

"The tonfas freak will be fine." Todoroki heard Bakugou growling. "Call Reborn and tell him the fuck is going on. Don't let the dumb extras enter the fucking forest."

"Right!" Sawada fumbled with his phone.

"F...Flesh...Flesh...Let me see some flesh..." The villain's voice was carried by the wind and his words sent shivers down their spines.

"This isn't going to hold." Gokudera scowled as he dodged again. "Hey, Baseball Idiot! Regroup! Todoroki, you create a bigger ice to block him for now. I got a plan!"

The hero in training didn't know what the silver haired teen wanted to do but he still created another defense made of ice. Out of the corners of his eyes, he saw Gokudera whisper something to Bakugou and Yamamoto before pulling out a package from his pockets.

"Ice Hot, back down on the count of three!" Bakugou hollered at him. "One, two...Three!"

Todoroki dived for cover. He saw Gokudera tossing something at the villain as they exploded, sending a rainbow colour of sparks and smoke filling the space around the villain's head, obscuring his vision. It might have been a box of those toy firecrackers that was popular for summer nights sold in convenience stores. Bakugou grabbed Yamamoto and an explosion went off, sending them both to the air. The blond tossed the other teen at the villain before Todoroki could yell out anything. Propelled by the force of Bakugou's explosion, Yamamoto shot forward.

"Shigure Souen style: Early Summer Rain."

There was a flash of silver as the sword cut through the air and the villain went limp, dropping to the ground. Yamamoto landed on his feet too. There were a few nicks along his clothing but overall he was fine.

"I used the blunt end, he's only unconscious." Yamamoto came back to them.

"How did you...never mind." Todoroki could hear something else coming. Soon, they were reunited with Midoriya (who suffered a lot of damages), Shoji, and Tokoyami. They decided to cut through the forest and meet up with their teachers since there were also villains at the clearing and the rest of the pro heroes were battling them there.

"By the way, who are they?" Tokoyami asked, mentioning the three civilians. Todoroki explained what happened at the halfway point and that the trio wasn't with the villains. They needed to escort them all to safety.

On their way through the forest, they encountered Uraraka and Tsuyu but soon all of them realized that Bakugou and Tokoyami had been taken by a mask-wearing villain with a long coat and a cane.

Midoriya came up with a plan to go after the villain. They couldn't let the criminals escape with their classmates. But they were still too slow.

The villains were leaving with Bakugou. The black haired one with burnt scars and silver piercings on his face had a hand around the nape of Bakugou's neck as he dragged him into the wrap gate.

"KACCHAN!" Midoriya was running towards them, with his face scrunched up by desperation and pain.

Bakugou's body looked stiff and a cold sweat rolled down his face. Midoriya's movements were slowed down by the pain but someone else raced past him. A blur of brown hair flashed past Todoroki's eyes and shot directly at Bakugou and the villains.

"Have to save Bakugou with my dying will!"

The person leaped just as the mist began to disperse. His body vanished behind the thick dark fog and soon, he vanished along with Bakugou and the villains.

They have been taken.

"Hey, Hibari!" Ryohei shouted from behind the tree. He was carrying an unconscious woman. He doesn't really know who she was but judging from the bright yellow costume, he supposed she was a hero. "I can't get a hold of Sawada and the others."

There was a grunt from Hibari but he didn't turn around. Licking his lips, he readied his tonfas. "Get going if you want. I'm going to bite this one to death first."

In front of him, there was a...villain, that was what most people would call it. It looked like the creatures that attacked Hosu City a while back. Exposed brain and pale green skin, multiple limbs extended out from its muscular back. At the end of each limb was some kind of weapon, from hammers to chainsaw, it was a menacing monster. It was also wearing a metal face guard and there was some kind of gage inside its mouth.

They had entered the forest after Tsuna, Gokudera, and Yamamoto. Hibari didn't want to travel in groups but Royhei had always been bad at reading the room. It was going to develop into a one on one between them when they saw the monster attacking the pro hero. Of course, Hibari wanted to fight it.

Ryohei took a step out from behind the tree but he immediately

retracted his foot. The white haired teen jumped back with the hero in his arms as a chainsaw slammed into the tree, cutting it in half. The boxing club president let out a sharp breath. He fought best with his fists but he couldn't let the woman down. She was defenseless right now! They had dragged the fight over to just outside of the weird fog's reach. Ryohei's muscles felt slightly weaker than usual because he had breathed in some of the strange gas.

"It won't let me." Or rather, it was coming after the woman as if it had a mission. She was already injured and blood seeped out from the wound on her head.

Hibari charged at it, a bloodthirsty grin spreading on his lips. "Get in my way and I'll bit you too."

"You're being extremely unreasonable!" But it wasn't like it was the first day that he knew Hibari so Ryohei only scrambled out of the way.

The high pitched sound of metal scraping against metal filled their corner of the forest. Heavy thuds of strong impact landing on flesh and noises of bones snapping formed a chorus but the villain didn't seem to be able to register pain. It kept coming after Ryohei as he ducked and dodged. Huffing, the white haired teen threw a few punches while Hibari attacked from the other side but the monster could regenerate.

"Oh?" Hibari looked even more excited when he noticed the wounds on the villain vanishing. His stance changed, feet shifting wider apart as he dropped his center of gravity. The previous assault he launched was just a warm up.

"Get out of the way!" Ryohei yelled when he spotted two figures emerging from the trees on the side. Kicking off against the ground, he slammed both of them to the ground as a force swept over, knocking all the trees on that side down.

"W-Who are you?" the boy with the headband asked. He and his companion were both wearing gas masks. His eyes landed on the woman in Ryohei's arms and they widened with worry. "Ragdoll! What happened?"

"That's what I extremely want to ask!" Ryohei ushered them to scramble out of the way so they wouldn't interfere with Hibari's fight. "Please tell us what is going on!"

Because despite having Hibari fighting on their side, he still couldn't shake the oppressive sense of dread looming over his heart.

2

The holding cell looked like it was pulled from an old black and white movie. It was a bleak place, grey walls with peeling wallpaper and it smelled of cheap expired air fresheners. No windows. Patches and bricks and pipes near the ceiling. It was small too, barely the size of his bedroom back home.

There was a wooden door on the other end of the room. The only way out.

Katsuki sat in the metal chair. It was uncomfortably cold and hard against his bum and back but he ignored it. His wrists were bounded by metal too while thick leather straps tied him to the chair. He had tested it already and determined that it was strong and he was probably stuck in his chair prison for a while before he woke up. His wrists felt raw but he didn't smell any blood so it probably wasn't that bad. And sure, his body was stiff and a rash would probably develop but It could have been worse.

There was another more pressing matter to address.

"Why the fuck did you throw yourself after me?" he croaked, voice hoarse and rough from how dry his throat felt.

Across from him, Sawada was bound on the ground. The villains tied his wrists together with plastic zip ties and used ropes on his feet, tying him to the nonfunctional furnace. Sawada woke up after Katsuki did and almost immediately, he started freaking out. He had just marginally calmed down but he was still shivering with fear.

Asshole beat Varia but was still jumpy like a rabbit.

Hearing Katsuki's voice, he looked up shakily. There was a bruise on his left cheek and it was starting to turn blue and purple. "My body moved on its own?"

Katsuki rolled his eyes at him. Reborn probably shot the idiot with a dying will bullet. "That's not what I meant. Why the fuck would you want to save *me*?"

Dying will bullets only bring out what the person's strongest desire at the moment was. It couldn't force people to become vicious murderers

or holy saints.

“W-We’re friends right?” Sawada gulped with his usual sense of hesitancy. “Even if it’s just sort of friends? You’re loud and scary most of the time…but I don’t think you’re a bad guy. I don’t want you to get hurt, like I don’t want to see Gokudera-kun or anyone else get hurt either. If you can stop blasting me whenever Reborn asks then it would be even better.”

“We’re not friends,” Katsuki spat out. He was Xanxus’s boyfriend. There was no way he’d be buddy buddy with Sawada (both Sawadas sucked, the only Sawada he could acknowledge in a less aggressive fashion was Sawada Nana, the wife and the mother) of all people.

Sawada blinked, confusion flashing across his face. He hissed as the bruise on his cheek began to swell. “We kind of are?”

“What makes you so sure of that?”

“…My intuition?”

Vongola’s famous hyperintution. Little shit was getting too used to Katsuki’s short fuse and colourful language if you ask the blond. Once he figured out that Katsuki doesn’t actually attack without proper reason, Sawada had gotten more bold. It also didn’t help that he realized Katsuki doesn’t hit as hard as most of the others around him since he still had to consider his position in UA. At least, Katsuki doesn’t go after Tsuna with giant hammers and AK-47 like Reborn.

“Fucking dumbass.”

The brown haired teen attempted to give him a sheepish smile then the room returned to silence again.

“What do you think is going to happen to us?” Sawada asked quietly as he curled into himself, tucking his knees close to his chest. For some reason he still has his gloves with the 27 on them on. The villains probably didn’t think too much about them because they looked like regular knitted gloves. They even wrapped another strap around the gloves so they acted as part of his restraints.

There was no way to tell the time in here and they don’t know how long they have been knocked out. Judging from his physical state, Katsuki would guess they were out for no longer than a few hours at best. The first time his consciousness surfaced, Katsuki had woken up with a bunch of villains staring at him. Their murderous ringleader

wanted to recruit him, which was bullshit in Katsuki's opinion. After he verbally insulted them, he got wheeled in here with Sawada. Told to rethink his options.

The threat couldn't be more obvious. If he didn't comply, they were going to do a number on Sawada.

"Don't know. But considering we're both still breathing with all limbs intact, we're good for now."

Sawada grimaced with panic rumbling in the back of his throat and he sounded like he was going to cry. They both tensed up when they heard the door creaking open. The younger teen jerked into the corner, fear visible on every fiber of his being.

"B-Bakugou..."

"Zip it," Katsuki ordered. He knew this game. Squalo taught him and he had seen Levi do it to others. Humiliation. Doubts. Silence, Trauma. Indignation. All key to forcing submission. They wanted to break them before they started whatever they had planned for them.

"Rise and shine, kiddos! It's time to meet the boss! Don't worry, he's civil." The person that came in was wearing a dark skin tight suit. "He's going to crush you."

His speech pattern was strange and he rambled a lot. Contradicting sentences and wild hand gestures, his body seemed to be controlled by two different entities. There was a school girl behind him. She had a feverish craze in her eyes, almost like when Bel was in one of his episodes. The damn prince would lose it whenever he saw his own blood.

"Can I cut them a little before we bring them over to Shigaraki and the others?" she asked, all innocent and smiley. Katsuki could see her sharp canines as she grinned at them with a faint blush. Psycho. Deranged.

Katsuki knew this type too well.

"No, Shigaraki said not to touch them." The man shook his head but quickly thought out loud to himself, "Why not? Just let her do it...No, we can't! Gotta keep them clean and squeaky! Up! Up! We gotta get going!"

The schoolgirl got Sawada and pointed a knife behind the teen's back,

forcing him to walk. Meanwhile, the walking bag of personality disorder wheeled Katsuki out of the room. They didn't go far, there was a short hall that was equally not well maintained and entered a different door.

The inside looked like a bar. There still wasn't a single window but the wooden floor looked polished and new. A bar table with some stools, a TV on the wall, and the place was a lot cleaner than he expected. A soft light casted over the rows of alcohol on the shelves but Katsuki thought they looked like they were more for display only.

It smelled like third rated villain wannabes and distilled wine in here.

Shigaraki, or Hands, was seated on one of the bar stools. He still looked like some university kid who spent too much time staying up late to play video games.

"You're awfully calm." Shigaraki observed. Most of his face was covered by the hand on his face.

"Told you before, ain't my first rodeo." He hung out with Varia and he was a supermodel dating Xanxus. This wouldn't be the first time someone had tried to mess with him. Victoire had some creepy and way too friendly or delusional fans too. It wouldn't be the first time someone had gotten funny ideas and tried to grab him. He set his eyes to meet the man head on. "What you fuckers got in store this time?"

They were persistent, Katsuki would give them that. Society failed you, you clearly don't belong, yada yada yada...it was as if they got a handbook on recruiting newbie villains and they are trying every trick in it. They got an audience today too. There was the burnt freak who grabbed him by the neck back in the forest, some weirdo with thick lips who carried herself in a feminine way, the teenage girl, Wrap Gate, and Twice. The lizard dude and Mask weren't here.

He kept his cool as much as he could. Levi had a bright idea of locking him up in one of Varia's holding cells before. Katsuki spent hours in the dark listening to the screams from the other prisoners. It was part of his training. Now that he thought about it, it was pretty messed up but in comparison, this dingy old bar suddenly looked like heaven.

"You know what I see when I look at you?" Magne came closer, voice dipping in honey as she placed a hand on Katsuki's shoulder. "I see someone who is misunderstood. Someone who no one thinks is worthy to be a hero."

Ah. It was an emotional manipulation game today.

Katsuki glared at her. He distracted his anger by imagining Xanxus's face. The man would probably scoff at this pissy poor attempt and deemed everyone in on it imbeciles.

"Nobody care for what you have to say. They all just want the same sunshine and pristine image of what they think a hero should be."

Count to ten. Keep his temper in check or he'd fall for their cheap shot. Magne was still talking but Katsuki didn't hear her. When Katsuki finished his count, he decided it was time to hijack the control over their conversation. He wanted to curse at them and fight, thrash in his chair and all that but he wasn't alone. There was still an idiot Sawada with a knife pointed at him.

Kid ain't dying on his watch.

Sure, Varia didn't approve of this wimp being the next successor but Vongola wouldn't let outsiders trash over one of their own either.

"You want me to join your little villain club to throw society into chaos. The first step in your plan is killing the Symbol of Peace, All Might." The blond kept his gaze trained on Hands. "That sounds about right?"

"Exactly. You're finally starting to get it." Fucker had the audacity to sound happy, hopeful.

"What do you plan to do after that?"

"What do you mean?"

"What happens after society is in chaos?" Katsuki was just a tiny bit curious. "You people keep spewing crap about how this current society is oppressive. Fucks with us with all the restrictions and rules and all of you just want to live freely, true to your hearts...You do realize if everything is up in fire and smoke then that means *everything* is going to be gone right? No law and order means no one is going to get anything shit down. Transportation and production stops. Every single modern luxury we have been enjoying now poofs along with it. You gonna start your own farms and make your own toilet paper?"

No one answered him. They were all looking at him as if they suddenly didn't understand Japanese. Even the Wrap Gate bitch stopped shining his wine glasses. Well, Katsuki didn't expect any

intelligent answer to come from this lot anyways.

“Are you mocking us?” Shigaraki scowled.

“No, I am legit concerned about whether joining you meant I won’t have Wifi or toilet paper in the future.”

There was a lot of back and forth after that. The villains sounded like a broken record as they kept trying to persuade him. Naming off the mean things that the press had to say about him and how the police would suspect him to be a traitor. It was repetitive and way too obvious that they were trying to steer clear of answering Katsuki’s question directly.

“The heroes aren’t going to come for you,” the burnt motherfuker said. “They’d never find you in time.”

Katsuki doesn’t know about that but he was dead certain that *Vongola* was going to come after these bastards. Their damn Decimo was right here in the same room with all these lunatics.

He hoped whoever came for the rescue mission blew this place up to the sky.

“...Release him,” Shigaraki suddenly ordered. Katsuki might have spaced out and missed a thing or two. “We have to treat him like an equal since we’re recruiting him.”

Dabi turned around, not willing to step close to Katsuki. “He’s going to fight.”

“He won’t.” The villain’s boss waved dismissively. “Not when his little friend is still with Toga.”

The girl giggled at the mention of her name, the knife in her hands pressing way too close to Sawada’s neck. Sawada’s face paled and his knees were shaking.

“No,” barked Katsuki while he tried to move his fingers inside his restraints. “Not me. If you want to prove you’re serious about recruiting me, you take the restraints off that wimp.”

“Him?”

Lifting a condescending sneer, Katsuki knew he had to keep their attention on him more. “You shitheads are scared of a middle school

wuss? Some villains you are."

"I would hardly call that child a wuss." Compress (the bastard who had gotten too close when Katsuki was focused on making sure the idiots didn't accidentally leak the fact that they were connected to the mafia) came in with the lizard man. "Children these days sure are built differently. His friend took out one of our Nomus and he jumped after you."

Hibari. Katsuki almost smiled. He could practically see the head of the disciplinary committee having a go at the modified villain. He saw the same thought flashing by Sawada's face too.

"Well, he's not the guy who took down Nomu. He's just No-Good Tsuna." If these villains were any good, they would have gone to dig up info on Sawada. Katsuki didn't like Reborn but he was sure that Vongola and the best hitman in the world would keep the mafia and explosion/death on a daily basis thing quiet. The League shouldn't be able to find anything out of the ordinary. Otherwise, they would be treating Sawada a lot differently.

Shigaraki seemed to be considering his options here. His red eyes landed on Sawada, scanning the teen from head to toe and causing visible discomfort.

Sawada gulped as he turned to Katsuki with teary eyes. "Bakugou-kun, I—"

"Shut up, Dame-Tsuna. You're not the *boss* of me," Katsuki hissed dangerously at him. "Chill before you get both of us killed."

The Decimo candidate froze, cowering back into his shell as his shoulders slumped. He was pathetic all around. Not a threat. And there were at least eight different ways he could get sent to an early grave in this room if he didn't get stabbed by the crazy bitch beside him.

"Alright," Shigaraki finally agreed. "Release the brat, Twice."

"Sure thing. Why am I the one who had to do it?"

The adult villain took the girl's knife and cut Sawada free. Sawada rubbed his tired wrists but he didn't dare to move an inch from his spot either. His head was hung low as his shoulders trembled. The villains in the room didn't pay him much attention after seeing how he looked like he was about to piss himself.

“Back to business then,” Shigaraki turned back to face Katsuki. “Are you ready to join us, Bakugou Katsuki?”

For the first time since they got captured, a smile formed on Katsuki’s face. Very slowly, he said: “Over. My. Dead. Body. Assholes.”

“Shigaraki, move!” Wrap Gate bartender was the first to notice but he was too late. As the mist around him dispersed out, ice crept over the floor. The metal around Katsuki’s hands clattered to the ground and he immediately set off an explosion towards Magne’s face, causing the villain to jump back with a yelp of pain.

With a flick of his wrist, a small needle-like dagger appeared in Katsuki’s hand and he used it to cut himself free from the chair. Who knew Bel’s tricks about hiding weapons would come in handy in a situation like this? He kept setting off explosions, causing a haze of dark smoke and loud noises to fill the room to throw the villains off guard. A blast of fire came at him and he flipped over, kicking the chair right into the flames. Before the blond’s feet touched the floor, he leaped and grabbed onto the dangling light above him.

The temperature in the room dropped in an instant. There was shouting and the anger in the villains’ voices were evident.

“Kuroguri! Knock them both out!” That was Hands, throwing a tantrum like a kid who hadn’t gotten his way but no one answered him. No one could.

Vongola’s Zero Point Breakthrough froze everything in sight.

The ice encased blue flames, frost crept onto the villains’ legs and covered a good half of the room. Katsuki swung himself over and pulled Sawada along. The wimpy middle schooler had changed. The ugly knitted gloves turned into shiny metallic ones with an “X” on the back. Silver and orange, they fitted his hands perfectly. A vibrant orange flame also lit up over his forehead and the timid nature was replaced by a strange calmness.

Large round eyes that were filled with panic and fear a moment ago were now devoid of any trace of emotions. A reddish orange light blazed to life behind those cold eyes.

Sawada was a whole different person when he was in a fight.

“Get going!” Katsuki blasted the door down and they were booking it down the hall. The place looked like a maze and there weren't any

windows in sight. “Which way?”

“Left!” Sawada screamed over the sounds of roaring chaos in the room behind them. Something crashed into the wall behind them. Katsuki turned around and saw the villains coming after them but they were probably clones since he could still hear shouting from inside the bar. Without thinking, he grabbed the fire extinguisher around the corner and blasted. White dust and foam hit the clones head on while Sawada turned and hit them with a blast of his sky flames. The clones were melting.

Very soon, they saw a window at the end of the hall. They were on the fourth or fifth floor of a building judging from the height.

“You can fly right?” Katsuki didn’t wait for an answer as he raced ahead. “Catch me and start flying.”

“Catch…?” Sawada’s eyes widened when he realized what was about to happen. The blond teen broke through the glass and basically flung himself out the ruined window without any hesitation.

The brown haired teen jumped after him, arms flinging out towards the falling blond. After catching Katsuki, orange flames amplified from his hands and they soared through the air. It was night time outside. The city’s lights illuminated the streets beneath them but above, the clouds were dark and heavy with moisture.

Katsuki wrapped his arms around Sawada’s neck. “We got incoming!” he shouted past the howling winds. “It’s gonna be hot!”

He could see Compress flying after them. The man’s body was covered in some kind of bluish magnetic field. If he touched them they would get captured again.

Extending an arm out, Katsuki lifted a feral grin. They were high up in the sky and there wasn’t anyone around to get caught in the crossfire. As the villain got close, Katsuki released his maximum blast. The explosion detonated in close range to the villain and propelled them further away.

The force sent them shooting through the air, far far away from the villain’s hideout. Wherever that was. Sawada’s flames started sputtering and they nearly crash landed into a trash pile behind an alley.

The fire died out from the Decimo candidate’s body and his face was

green. Turning around, he vomited over Katsuki's shoes but he didn't puke out anything other than stomach acid and saliva. Maybe some greenish bile too.

"Gross." The blond jumped back. He was going to have to toss these afterwards.

"Sorry...You really should come with a warning label." Sawada finally recovered enough to complain. He sounded weak and he looked even worse. There were bruises all over his body and his clothing was in tatters. "A *really* long warning label."

"I roll with Varia, that should be its own warning label." Katsuki cackled like a hyena. The guy was probably having issues adjusting to the ringing in his ears after being in such close contact with an explosion that big. "Come on, you shitty excuse for Tenth. We have to keep moving."

Reaching over, he helped support the other boy's weight. Being held captive had a bigger impact on Sawada. The younger teen had lived his life normally in a quiet town with barely any villain activities. While he had been training under Reborn's strict guidance, he wasn't used to facing off dangerous villains or being kidnapped. He probably hadn't even gotten a crash course in torture like Katsuki did. He was scared, exhausted, and hurt.

Katsuki's own arms ached from releasing the big blasts. He could also feel the fatigue from both his training and being held captive for hours without any water or food. Crash landing in trash and slamming against hard concrete didn't help much either.

"...Not Tenth...I don't want to be Decimo," Sawada groaned. He was slurring and out of it, perhaps a concussion? Idiot had tried to chusion their fall after all.

Katsuki smiled, even if it hurt to do so.

"Keep sticking your head in denial, Sawada Tsunayoshi." The guy was selfish, lazy, and a whiny piece of shit in general. Wouldn't have pulled half of the stunt he did unless someone pointed a gun to his head or aimed it at someone close to him. He was a coward and a loser but he fought a good fight.

For that, Katsuki could find an ounce of respect for him.

For a brief moment, he wondered what kind of shit Tsunayoshi could

throw the mafia world into in the future.

The looks on the cops' faces when they walked into the police station was absolutely priceless. There was a lot of confused shouting and commotion while the adults got things in order. Katsuki and Tsuna got sent to a hospital, where both of them got examined and patched up. Multiple pro heroes were recruited to guard them.

The blond stuck close to the other boy throughout the whole thing. They made it out of a villain's lair and he wasn't about to lose Vongola's Tenth in case any of the bastards tried to come after them again.

If the Japanese villains did fuck up Vongola's heir, there would be hell to pay. And it won't end well for the civilians.

Outside of dehydration and exhaustion, he hadn't been injured too badly. The red marks around his wrist and the bruises on his body would heal easily enough. Sawada had a few cuts along with the bruises on him but thankfully he didn't sustain a concussion. Exhaustion just caught up with him after they got to safety.

While Sawada slept on a hospital bed, Katsuki watched the clock ticked by. Sawada had subconsciously flown them in the direction of Namimori, which was the opposite direction of UA. The officers standing guard outside told him his teachers were coming and his parents would arrive later. He assumed he'd have a few more hours since his parents were still on a plane back to Japan.

His own head was heavy but he forced himself to stay alert, one hand still grabbing onto Tsuna's wrist. If the villains could teleport, he wasn't about to let the guy go until he was absolutely certain no one else was going to try again. He wasn't sure how much the League knew about the mafia or if they had any knowledge of flames. Vongola's Dying Will Flame was a signature, too recognizable to those who understood what it was.

"Bakugou Katsuki?"

There was a police officer in a trench coat in front of him. The man knelt down in front of him and took off his hat. He had a plain face, nothing too recognizable.

"I am Detective Tsukauchi, I know you two have been through a lot of

hard stuff for the past 48 hours but can you come with me so we can ask you a few questions and take your statement?" He kept his voice low to not wake Tsuna.

"If you have questions you can ask right here," Katsuki said. "I'm not leaving this idiot until his family arrives."

He doesn't trust Tsuna with anyone other than his guardians or Reborn. Even the Cavallone boss will do since the Cavallones were Vongola's allies.

"That is fine too, as long as you're comfortable." The man wasn't offended at all, honest and earnest too. "I will try to keep this short."

He was direct enough. Katsuki gave him a run down of what happened. The villains restrained them, kept blabbering about their villain origin stories, and tried to recruit him. They said he was alone in this world, stranded. Fuck that. How the hell could he be lonely when he had a pack of jackasses back in Italy?

"I'm no villain," he said.

The detective nodded. He asked more stuff about Katsuki's connection to Tsuna and how the kids had ended up camping so close to UA's secret training base. Katsuki gave honest answers. He was Tsuna's tutor and he absolutely had no clue about how they ended up camping there. But Tsuna did say the trip was planned weeks before and UA changed location last minute, it was a coincidence.

Reborn wouldn't be stupid enough to bring them so close to a bunch of heroes in training at such a time.

When he got to the part about how they escaped, Katsuki had to get creative. Tsuna's quirk registry only had hyper intuition and that was after Reborn updated it from "quirkless". He said the villains had a visitor from the wrong side of the law and they had a fight. Tsuna and him escaped during the chaos. He kept his answers short, focusing more on what he did instead of what Tsuna did.

He doesn't want the cops to know about flames, can't explain that without diving into the mafia part of the story. Explaining it off as Tsuna's quirk was bad too. A quirk this powerful would get on the Hero Commission's radar and the twerp didn't need more eyes on him.

There was a pause, almost like the detective was judging how much he should believe him. Reborn was going to have to fucking refine and

back up Katsuki's story later. Maybe get a few illusionists to tweak people's memories. He'd leave the illegal shit for the baby hitman to figure out.

"Do you know if Sawada Tsunayoshi had any connections to the villains?"

Katsuki narrowed his eyes, scrutiny and suspicion shining through as he met the man's gaze. Neither side wavered.

"It's customary that I ask."

"No, he's not working for the League if that is what you were asking. One of the bitches wanted to stab him. I don't know about any connections to any villains either." He wasn't lying. Vongola was honourable. They weren't the regular shithead villains.

That concluded this round of questioning. The detective's phone buzzed and he took his leave. Katsuki already gave the first officers he saw a general description of where the villain was holding them. He hoped that was enough for them to catch the lunatics.

"Tsuna!"

A woman came rushing into the room. She had short brown hair and soft eyes like her son's. She let out a breath of relief when she saw him sleeping on the bed. Tears were threatening to fall from her eyes. Reborn came in behind her, carried by Fuuta. The ranking kid who stayed with Tsuna for Vongola's protection. He was about eight or nine and he had a special ability that allowed him to communicate with the stars. They would tell him information in the form of ranks.

Katsuki saw Reborn tilted his hat at him ever so slightly in gratitude. He kept himself still. The hitman was furious, more at the danger that his student went through and how things went out of his control, but they both knew this wasn't a good place to discuss things.

Katsuki had a million things he wanted to ask. What happened after they got taken? Where were the Tenth Generation idiots? And a lot of other stuff but his eyelids were getting heavy. The world's best hitman was here. He assumed CEDEF or other Vongola agents were here to keep surveillance of the scene too.

Safe. He was safe now.

Suddenly, his whole body was weightless.

And darkness took over his mind.

Heavy rain pounded against the polished windows of Varia's castle. The lavish room was dark but none of the occupants cared. They were spread out in different parts of the room but all of their eyes were focused on the man behind the thick ebony desk.

Hideous scars painted over the majority of Xanxus's face and his expression right now could probably frighten anyone with a lick of survival instincts into having a heart attack. In front of him, there were reports of Katsuki's kidnapping and pictures of him. The photos must have been taken in the hospital by Vongola or Reborn because the kid was sleeping, curled up on his side with blue and red marks around his wrists. He was also covered in a light layer of dust or black soot.

Burning fire lit up on Xanxus's hand, disintegrating a blurry picture of the League of Villains to ashes. The veins popped along the back of his hand as his knuckles turned white from how tightly he had balled his fist. Shadows and light flickered across his face, tainting his scars in an even more dangerous air.

"Xiexiexie, the stupid heroes let the villains got away." Their intel said when the heroes and police raided the bar, the villains were long gone, leaving only ice and a ruined bar behind. However, they also found another location where multiple Nomus were stored. A battle broke out there resulting in multiple heroes being injured.

"Katsuki can't model for the next two weeks at least, not with all the media and police attention on him. Someone's going to have to repay all my lost revenue and not to mention I need compensation because they damaged my money-making tree." Mammon was clicking away on their calculator. Their voice was icy cold as the tension in the atmosphere thickened.

"Oh my, these bodies are horrendous," Lussuria judged mercilessly while he flipped through a file on Nomus. There wasn't much info on them but there were a few clearer pictures of the monsters from the Hosu incident. "Such a waste."

Levi kept his mouth shut, his attention was on their boss, who was looking angrier and more terrifying by the second.

"VOI! The Ninth's order is here!" Squalo slammed the door open and

he had a letter with Vongola Nono's flames on it. He tossed it to Xanxus, who scanned it quickly before getting up. The League touched Sawada Tsunayoshi. Not only were his teenage guardians unhappy, so was his father, Vongola's outside advisor, and Vongola Ninth himself.

Maybe their organization had been away from Japan for too long for the underground world there to remember just who exactly ruled above all. It didn't matter if the League knew of Sawada's connection to Vongola. They touched someone they shouldn't have.

Now they were going to pay.

"What's your order, Boss?" Levi asked.

Xanxus didn't look at him as he stormed past, his jacket fluttering behind him as the heat gathered inside his palms.

For the first time since they learnt that Bakugou Katsuki had been kidnapped, the man spoke. His voice was gravelly, like the low rumbles from a beast's throat before it attacked when he commanded: "Annihilate them."

"You heard the man." Squalo cranked his neck while a grin split upon his lips. "Wheels up in twenty. We're going to finish what that Sawada trash can't do properly."

Normally the high commanding officers of Varia would complain about having to wipe the brat Tenth Generation's asses for them but today, no one voiced any disagreements. They couldn't care less if the villains were trying to throw Japan into chaos or if they had a grudge against All Might.

But they weren't going to let these villains off the hook so easily either.

The bastards laid a hand on one of their own so they were going to *bleed* for that.

"Where are we tossing the bodies? In the sewer or in front of UA?" Bel was already planning on where he was going to make his first cuts.

Levi scoffed. "You seriously think there's going to be any bodies left to be disposed of after Boss is done with them?"

"Aw, I thought the Princess would like a souvenir."

“Like an eyeball or a head?”

"Stick them on some bamboo sticks with wrapping and a ribbon then they could be a flower bouquet."

“Whatever, as long as we find their safe so I can empty it.”

Their chilling conversation travelled down the dark hallway along with the soft echoes of their footsteps.

It was time to get to work.

Chapter End Notes

> And the kidnapping arc is done :) sort of. Got the aftermath of it and some fluff next chapter.
>
> Let me know what you guys think (≧▽≦)

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

WARNING: Descriptions of violence and gore

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

It was a mess when Tsukauchi arrived at the UA training camp site and he knew for sure he would be pulling a lot of overtime this week. Firefighters and police have sealed off the area while other pro heroes nearby came to assist them. The villains have already taken off and since it was a teleportation quirk, they couldn't track them by scent or footprints.

Out of the forty students, 15 inhaled poison gas and fell unconscious. There were nine injured and 15 unharmed. One pro hero suffered blunt force trauma to the head and another was also injured. Somehow, there was a group of civilians camping nearby and they got dragged into the mess too.

Worst of all, two children were missing from the scene.

Bakugou Katsuki from class A of the hero course and a middle schooler called Sawada Tsunayoshi were taken by the League.

When he got close to where the students were, he could hear the clamouring and commotion from miles away. There were a few teenagers standing a bit further from the UA students and they were in a heated argument.

"Te—Tsuna got taken!" The one who was yelling the loudest has silver hair and he might have some foreign blood because his features were not distinctively Japanese. He was dressed like an edgy style that Tsukauchi usually saw favored by delinquents.

"I know, calm down Gokudera." His companion, a taller boy with short black hair, was trying to calm him. He wasn't smiling either but...was that a bamboo sword he was holding?

Gokudera shoved him, emerald eyes narrowing dangerously with frustration and anger. "How the fucking hell am I supposed to calm down when Te—Tsuna is missing? Damn it!"

“We don’t know where the villains took them. Besides, Katsuki-kun is with him. They’d be fine. We have to trust them.”

“It’s precisely because that blond prick is with Tsuna that I’m worried!” Slamming his fist against the “That’s it! I’m not going to wait around any more! I’m going to find them myself!”

The other teen with bandages around his fists grabbed Gokudera from behind.

“Let me go, Turf Head!” Gokudera screamed while he struggled against the hold.

The boy didn’t budge. He pinned Gokudera down with the dark haired one’s help. “I’m extremely worried about Sawada and Bakugou too but we gotta stay put! The cops are here and we extremely can’t cause more trouble for them!”

Tsukauchi frowned. “They are the civilian campers?”

“Yes,” one of the officers first on scene replied. “That’s Gokudera Hayato, Yamamoto Takeshi, and Sasagawa Ryohei. Gokudera and Yamamoto were with Bakugou and Sawada shortly before the two were taken. Sasagawa had a run in with Ragdoll and two UA students, he carried her to the medics. They have been quite lively since they learnt their friends had been kidnapped. A little roughed up from moving around in the woods but overall still healthy and uninjured.”

That was good news. Tsukauchi doesn’t know why a bunch of teenagers were camping next to UA’s training camp yet but the media would chew them all up if civilians had been injured fatally.

Missing wasn’t any better though. Sighing, he turned his attention to where a group of police were transporting the defeated villains away. His eyes narrowed and his expression turned gravely serious. However, the slight twitch of his fingers gave away his surprise.

“Who took down Nomu?” he asked in a hurry.

There was a Nomu here and no casualties on their side? Someone had also taken down a modified living weapon tailored specifically to be able to match *All Might* in power?

The Nomu that was being transported away looked like it had been hit with excessive blunt force trauma in multiple parts of its body. It was enough that its bones looked shattered in multiple places and its limbs

were flaccid like soggy spaghetti noodles. While the flesh still twitched as if it was in the process of regenerating, the officers were already tying it down with thick metal restraints and injecting more tranquilizer.

"...He's over there. Kid's a beast. When we got here, he was fighting that monster with a pair of tonfas! And beat it down enough that our men had a chance to put restraints on it before the regeneration kicked in. We haven't gotten a chance to check his quirk registry yet but he's adamant that he hadn't used his quirk."

Off to the side, there was a lean teenager with short black hair. His bangs covered down near his sharp eyes. Overall, he had delicate features and upon first impression, he didn't look like the type to be abusing violence. But right now, he was visibly agitated and he was still holding a pair of blood stained tonfas, some specs of red were on his clothing and face.

A middle schooler fighting on par with Nomu? Tsukauchi might just send this boy's file to Nezu to keep tabs on just in case. They may have a potential rising hero...as long as his background check and psyche tests come back clean.

But right now, Tsukauchi must focus on finding the League and the missing students. He threw himself into work immediately. They interviewed the students and the teachers, piecing together what happened in the forest on everyone's sides. Tsukauchi handled the civilians' interviews himself. As much as the teens look like they were just regular citizens, their timing was too suspicious and they had to check every avenue.

Time was ticking.

The first one of that group he interviewed was Gokudera. Strutting in, the silver haired boy was giving him attitude even before his butt touched the chair.

"Name?"

"Gokudera Hayato."

"Quirk?"

"Photographic memory."

So far, all true. Gokudera explained to him that they had this camping

trip set up before the end of the semester and they had no idea that UA was going to be nearby. The person who owned the cabin was a rich Italian man who was like a big brother to Sawada Tsunayoshi. He lended them his cabin. Then they ran into Ragdoll and the UA students during their own test of courage into the woods. He talked about the villains attacking and how they worked together to defeat the escaped convict.

“Before you say anything, I used firecrackers from a convenience store, it’s not illegal.” Gokudera’s lips gave a small curve but his eyes remained cold. Tsukauchi was reading a hint of pride in his posture.“And we were fucking under attack! I operated completely within my right under the laws of self-defense.”

He wasn’t wrong about that. While the laws on public quirk use were detailed and strict, the ones around self defense without quirks being involved were more ambiguous. His story aligned with what they have gathered so far too. They found an online purchase record of train tickets dated weeks in advance and UA was the one who relocated last minute.

“Your friend, Yamamoto Takeshi, used a sword on the villain?”

“It’s not his quirk. The Baseball Idiot learned swordsmanship from his dad.”

That wasn’t uncommon either. Being Japanese and part of the police force, Tsukauchi knew a fair amount of people who practiced kendo and taught their children the same. However, to be able to knock out a convicted felon with his sword...that took skills.

“And owning swords isn’t illegal either. He is well within his rights to carry one on a camping trip deep in the forest,” Gokudera added with a deep furrow marking the space between his eyebrows, almost as if he was challenging Tsukauchi. Like he had an answer prepared for anything Tsukauchi might be able to throw at him.

“You have studied the laws on self defense quite extensively,” Tsukauchi observed. He decided to move on from the subject since it didn’t look like he would get anything more from pressing further. “What is your relationship with Sawada Tsunayoshi and Bakugou Katsuki?”

“I’m friends with Tsuna. Go to the same school and we’re in the same class, same for Yamamoto.” There was a pause and then his expression soured. “Bakugou comes over to teach Tsuna Italian. Never like the

guy much."

"Why is that?"

He shrugged. "We just don't get along and have you met him? He's a stuck up entitled prick who is too full of himself."

His distaste for Bakugou wasn't too hard to imagine. From what Tsukauchi gathered, Bakugou wasn't a humble character.

"It said here that after Midoriya, Todoroki, and Shoji went after the villain who took Bakugou and Tokoyami, Sawada raced off on his own. Why did he do that?"

"...I told him not to do it!" Visible frustration and worry washed Gokudera's features. "But Tsuna was worried about that bastard...had a bad feeling about things. Now they both got themselves kidnapped, fuck. Fuck. Fuck!"

He slammed his fists against the table. Tsukauchi allowed the teen time to recollect himself. It was understandable that he was upset. His friend had been taken. However, Tsukauchi still felt like something was missing from the teen's answers. They talked for a few minutes longer and Tsukauchi's quirk didn't go off but by the end of it, the detective was already feeling wary.

It was the same for the other interviews too. Yamamoto Takeshi was more laid back and he offered Tsukauchi a few friendly smiles. When asked about his father and the sword, he brushed it off and stated that his real passion was baseball. The child had no interest in pursuing police or hero work, something quite uncommon in this day and age. *Everyone* wanted to be a hero at one point in their lives. Sasagawa Ryohei's statement contained a lot more "EXTREME!" and he really didn't know much. He had been too busy keeping Ragdoll away from Nomu.

"Hibari beat the monster up to the extreme!" That was all he said when asked about what happened in the forest.

"The medical examiner said you have large bruises on your back. Can you please explain how you got that?" Tsukauchi had an open folder in front of him. There was nothing out of the ordinary for Sasagawa's file. He was the captain of the boxing club and his grades weren't stellar. He had a younger sister and he was in the hospital a few times from non-villain related incidents.

“Oh that?” Sasagawa scratched his head. He kept his white hair in a buzz cut and there were bandages over the bridge of his nose. “I was trying to stop Hibari when the heroes and officers showed up…once Hibari starts fighting, it’s hard to get him to stop. Sawada probably could have convinced him faster.”

That was another headache. Tsukauchi had a hard time interviewing Hibari. He had suffered some light injuries and was healing at home. The boy disliked crowds and lawyered up immediately. Not that he had anything to hide or was scared he did something wrong, his family lawyer made it very clear that the Hero Commission had tried to recruit the teen a few times when he was younger and the Hibari family did not enjoy the attention.

Hibari had no intention of ever becoming a hero.

They would not give the Commission any chance or leverage to try another *recruiting attempt*.

Also, his quirk was Bird Whisper. Not a combative quirk. The child can communicate with birds, which meant he fought Nomu with his physical prowess alone. No enhancements. No quirk. No special abilities.

This was truly beyond impressive. No wonder the Commission wanted him.

But Tsukauchi didn’t have time to marvel at such potential. They were racing against the clock. Everyone knew the first 24 hours after a kidnapping were crucial. Tsukauchi and his subordinates along with various hero agencies worked nonstop to gather intel, plan, and organize their forces.

The villains want Bakugou because he was a hero student. He might have been targeted because of the brash nature he displayed during the Sports festival. However, Sawada might be in more danger. He wasn’t of any use to the League and there doesn’t seem to be a good reason for Shigaraki to let him live.

Tsukauchi was on his third Red Bull when he got the call about Bakugou Katsuki and Sawada Tsunayoshi turning up at a police station. He couldn’t believe his ears but his body went on autopilot and grabbed his jacket as he raced out the door.

The kids were slightly battered but alive. They had somehow escaped the villains’ lair and made it far enough to find help. Sawada was

resting soundly on the hospital bed when Tsukauchi arrived. He was the same as his pictures. Meek, smaller than other boys his age, and unassuming. While Tsukauchi would like to interview him, he was too exhausted for that. Bakugou was beside his bed, still grabbing onto Sawada as if he was standing guard or taking precaution against the kid suddenly being taken from his side.

Considering what they went through together, Tsukauchi doesn't blame the slightly aggressive or suspicious stares from the blond teen. What he does mind, however, was the very *off* way his quirk was reacting to Bakugou's answers.

Bakugou Katsuki hadn't lied but there was just something not right about his answers. It wasn't the full truth, that was what Tsukauchi's quirk was telling him. But he couldn't do a more thorough assessment in the hospital. A team of heroes and police were already at the site of the bar the teens escaped from. Since he was still needed to command the raid on the League's second hideout, Tsukauchi took his leave when Sawada's family showed up.

His mother came along with a boy who was staying at the Sawada house. According to the file he got, Sawada Nana had a home stay and was hosting a few international kids from Italy while they studied in Japan. There was also a baby in a suit but Tsukauchi didn't think too much of it. Maybe it was a relative's child and some parents these days did like to be extravagant.

He took his leave and walked out of the hospital towards his car. The parking lot was dimly lit but it was still busy. A girl nearly tripped in front of him and Tsukauchi gave her a hand up. She had dark blue hair that was partially tied up and wore a military green student uniform. There was also an eyepatch over her right eye.

"I'm sorry..." she apologized and she was a rather soft spoken girl. "Thank you."

"No worries." Tsukauchi smiled at her. His eyes met her good eye for a brief moment. It was a pond of violet, dark but comforting. She bowed her head slightly at him before entering the hospital.

Resuming his stride, Tsukauchi walked towards his car and his mind was still glossing over his conversation with Bakugou. He lost his train of thoughts so he had to pick it up again. Where was he? Something about Bakugou's statement regarding how he and Sawada got away from the League. He thought Bakugou's story was...what was wrong

with it again?

“Detective Tsukauchi,” one of his men called. “We got to go! The situation is rapidly developing and a report on the bar just came in!”

“Coming,” he shouted back. Shaking his head to get rid of the drowsiness of fatigue, he would have to revisit his notes later. Right now, there was an even more urgent situation to attend to.

They found a Nomu factory.

Sawada Tsunayoshi’s story checked out with Bakugou’s. His memory might have been jumbled a bit too because of how scared he was in all the chaos. The teen looked terrified when he sat down across from Tsukauchi.

He was jumpy and timid. The first thing he told Tsukauchi was that he doesn’t really remember much because of how terrified he was plus the villains weren’t interested in him so they didn’t address him much. They mainly wanted to use him as a hostage for threatening Bakugou into helping them.

They didn’t manage to arrest the League. Just as the heroes were about to raid the Nomu factory, the modified humans woke up and attacked. They wreaked havoc around Kamino and after a long battle, the police and heroes finally managed to neutralize the threats. Back at the bar, they only found it ruined with large chunks of ice left inside as if someone had transported a corner of the glaciers there. There were also torn pieces of clothing, traces of blood, and skin tissue left inside the ice, like whoever got trapped by it forcefully tore themselves away before they could be completely consumed by the ice. In addition, they found trace residues of Bakugou’s quirk around the place that would confirm they had a battle there.

“Sawada, I have to ask you how Bakugou became your Italian tutor.” They had already checked in with the owner of the cabin. The man was the young inheritor of an old Italian corporation and his subordinate was already connected with Tsukauchi’s police task force about the matter. They were deeply troubled by the events that occurred as well.

“My tutor set it up. Bakugou-kun is amazing. He knows a lot of different languages.” Although Sawada looked like he would flinch at the sound of a butterfly flying around, his voice was relatively smooth

when he answered. There doesn't seem to be any resentment or dislike towards Bakugou.

His tutor was a man named Reborn. Tsukauchi had been surprised to find out that the baby he saw back at the hospital was legally a grown man. He just had an unfortunate accident years ago where he got hit by a villain's quirk and was stuck in the body of a toddler. It would have been easier to sympathize with him if Reborn didn't give him the same feeling as Nezu sometimes does. They were both tricky characters to deal with.

"And how did your tutor know Bakugou?"

"I guess he saw him during the sports festival?" Half truth.

"But you've known him before then?"

He nodded. "We have met Bakugou-kun before, just didn't know it was him at the time. Bakugou-kun knew my...I guess I have to call him uncle? He is Italian and Bakugou-kun came to visit him when he was in Japan a while back."

For some reason, Sawada seemed hesitant about his uncle and his lips twitched in a weird fashion when he said it. Of course Tsukauchi asked him about it.

"Oh, I'm just not used to calling him that. And he's not that much older so it feels weird." The teen gave him a small smile. "He'd probably be super mad if he heard me call him that too."

According to the files, Sawada's father worked for an Italian company and he was stationed overseas a lot. Tsukauchi had seen Sawada Iemetsu's photo and the man looked like he had more foreign blood in him. It made sense that he had relatives in a different country.

"Do you know how Bakugou knew your uncle?"

"I don't know. You're going to have to ask Bakugou-kun that." Sawada scratched his head. There was genuine confusion in his words.

Tsukauchi's quirk hadn't been acting up but he still squared his jaw. It felt like he was missing something in all these statements...something that didn't register with his quirk but rubbed all his years on the job the wrong way. It was as if his intuition was screaming at him to stay on guard. He was about to press further when the door opened and Tamakawa came in. The man with a cat head saluted Tsukauchi but

there was a strong sense of urgency on his features.

“Sir, you have to see this *now*,” he said with a laboured breath as if he had been sprinting. Seeing that, Tsukauchi followed him out without second thoughts, leaving another of his officers to watch Tsuna from behind the one way glass.

“What is it?” He could see panic in the station. Almost everyone was hurrying and the phone kept ringing nonstop. It was a circus show of chaos out here. Was the League at it again? They have stationed men outside of Bakugou’s and Sawada’s residences. A few other officers were also sent to check up with UA’s side. They were supposed to report straight to him if they saw any abnormalities.

“It’s the League,” Tamakawa answered with wide eyes filled with disbelief, like he couldn’t believe the words that were about to come out of his own mouth. “They’re dead.”

Despite all the noises around them, Tsukauchi swore he could hear a pin drop as shock rocketed through his system, exploding inside his skull.

The League of Villains was dead? That sounded absurd!

It had barely been three days since the Kamino incident. How could the villains be dead?

No, more importantly, *who* killed them?

2

“Hyper Intuition? There was no goddamn way that was hyper intuition!”

Shigaraki didn’t want to use this term but for the lack of better description, he was having a *tantrum.* His plans were ruined in an instant when the ice filled the bar. He caught a glimpse of some kind of orange fire through all the smoke that Bakugou kid’s explosion created.

There was no way Sawada Tsunayoshi’s quirk was just hyper intuition.

He could hear a grunt of pain from across the room. Mr. Compress was helping Spinner rewrap up his leg. Toga was doing the same for Magne. Most of their members suffered varying degrees of injury from the ice. When they tried to escape, parts of their skin stuck to the ice

and tore off, leaving bloody patches behind. No, it wasn't ice. Shigaraki doesn't know what it was but his decay couldn't turn it to dust.

"Calm down, Shigaraki." Kuroguri was still half frozen, the frost had gotten to him too. It was strange, for a man made of fog, once the ice took hold, it was as if his body had been forced to gain a concrete form too. He was still slowly working his way out of the ice. "We do not know what we are dealing with here and All For One told us all to stay low for now too."

Sensei did say that. Although their conversation had been brief, the man was dead serious when he told the League to stay put in their hideout. The greatest villain after the rise of quirks in Japan had moved them to an abandoned warehouse in the middle of a barren land. There were rocks and some bushes outside but overall, it had been devoid of life. While it contained the necessities, The inside of the building wasn't furnished well either. A light layer of dust also covered the little furniture that they did have.

"I have some suspicions I have to check out but if what you saw is what I think it is...it is not wise to attack without a proper plan, Tomura. We must tread carefully."

That was what Sensei said before the call got cut and they patched themselves up while watching the news. The heroes found the Nomu factory and a horrible battle broke out. Even with the current No.1 and No.2 hero on the scene, it had been a hard battle that resulted in many being injured. Sensei didn't make an appearance there but the dozen Nomus did a splendid job in terrorizing the city.

That wasn't enough to make Shigaraki feel better about their current predicament. A setback. Not only did they lose their pawn they were also forced to ditch their base and were injured. He needed to gain more information on Sawada before he could come up with a different plan. Maybe he should check out the files on the other kids too. Those middle schoolers had enough courage to fight villains head on without a quirk. Not to mention the kid with the tonfas was matched against Nomu...if he could get that one to join them then things would get interesting.

They were down in numbers. He would need more party members if he wanted to launch another attack on the symbol of peace.

"Shigaraki, you want some? We're going to finish it all! There's still a

lot in the pot." Twice and Dabi had heated up some emergency rations and were having their fill right now.

Shaking his head, Shigaraki scratched at his neck, the skin over there itching and slightly flaky. Nothing seemed to be going his way and it was all because of those stupid kids! Getting up, he stepped into a small puddle of water.

Did the ice melt? Doesn't look like it.

More water was seeping up through the ruined floorboards, like a leak.

"Hey Twice, go check on the pipes." he turned around and shouted in irritation. If this place also flooded, he was going to be in a real pissed off mood. That was when he saw it. A broad figure dressed in black dropped from above and landed in the center of the room.

"WHO—" Twice was startled and the pot he was holding was dropped in a hurry.

Shigaraki could sense the danger coming. He could hear the sparks of electrical currents above their heads. "Kuroguri, transport everyone out!"

As soon as those words left his lips, the bright blue currents of electricity came striking down. They blasted into the water on the ground, traveling along the damp floor and expanding out to fry everyone in the room. A familiar black fog covered Shigaraki's vision but when the mist cleared, they were still inside the building, just in a slightly different position.

"Kuroguri?" he called.

"Shigaraki...run," the man strained as he wobbled to his feet. "I can't...there are two of everyone, I can't tell which is the real you."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Spinner shouted in a panic. They could all see that they weren't missing a member in the room. No doppelgangers either.
"Take down the intruder first!" Mr. Compress leaped forward, hand extended out to catch the man off guard.

"Wait, Compress!"

Blood was spilled.

Red, hot liquid dripped along the broken tiles that were oddly *dry,* which was impossible since Shigaraki knew it had been wet only seconds ago. Compress retreated while holding his arm. There was a row of silver daggers stabbed into his flesh.

“Xiexiexie you missed them,” a young voice came from above them. It sounded like a teenager. God, Shigaraki was starting to hate this specific age group even more now. The teen was sitting by the window higher up. He had blond hair that covered his eyes and a silver tiara on his head.

“Shut up,” the man that appeared first growled. Now Shigaraki could get a good look at him, he saw that it was some guy with lots of piercings and a wild retro punk hairdo. “I can take care of them all by myself.”

“The prince isn’t going to let you have all the fun. I need to collect some eyeballs.”

“Who are you people?” Dabi got up. While his voice was smooth and relaxed, his muscles were already tensing in anticipation. “I don’t suppose you’re here to apply to join us?”

“Heroes? No way, the idiots are still too busy with the aftermath of Kamino!” Twice helped stop the bleeding on Compress’s arm. Beside them, Magne hissed as she retracted her hand. She had tried to reach for her weapon but the metal conducts electricity as well and she was forced to let go before she got electrocuted.

“...What is Varia doing here?” Shigaraki asked. He recognized the crest on the uniform. While Sensei’s influence doesn’t extend far outside of Japan, they still keep up with the developments of what was going on in the global underground society. While domestic organized crime had declined after the rise of All Might, criminal organizations still thrived in other parts of the world.

“What’s Varia?” Toga asked. She had her dagger and support equipment on already.

“They're the Italian mafia. Assassins. Said to be the elites in the business.” Not much was known about them though because people don’t usually live to tell the tale.

“Why is the mafia after us?” questioned Magne. In any other situation, she might have squealed with excitement but these two clearly didn’t come in good faith.

“To kill you of course~” A deeper but also distinctively feminine voice came from behind her and Magne was sent flying. Her body flung across the room and skipped to a stop before slamming into the large shelf in the corner. She might have hit the power box too because the lights went out. The room dimmed, illuminated by only the greyish daylight filtering through the windows. It was still enough to see but the specific details were blurry.

“Big Sis Magne!”
The person who attacked Magne sighed, “Such a cute little girl. Agile too.”

He didn’t pursue Toga as she put some distance between them. These men were toying with them.

“What did we do to piss you off?” Shigaraki scratched his neck again, more violently this time. He was agitated already and Varia showing up here only added fuel to the fire. He wanted to destroy everything in his sight right now. The rage was burning inside of him like heated acid, trying to melt him from within.

He got his answer in the form of a rain of daggers showering down on him. There were too many for him to simply catch and decay. While dodging, Shigaraki yelled at Twice, “Make copies of us and overwhelm them!”

For some reason, Kuroguri was still in a trance. One moment he was holding onto his head and the next he was on his knees, shutting down like a machine without a power source.

“You got it—Ugh!” Twice coughed, the scarlet colour tainting the front of his mask and seeping through his battle suit. When he looked down, he saw a sword sticking out from his chest. The glistening white edge of the blade was covered in red.

There were more of them.

It was a massacre. Swords and daggers, explosions and fists, lightning struck again and again, leaving nowhere to run. These men were professionals and they certainly had skills that could only be obtained through years of bloodshed. Shigaraki hadn’t figured out what their quirks were in the chaos of the battle but even without it, Varia was a band of competent and cold blooded killers.

They don’t care about their colleagues either. Toga had luckily gotten some blood from one of them and transformed, hoping to deceive the

Varia members in the middle of the fight. She just needed to create a chance, make them hesitate for a second for Shigaraki to land his hand on them.

But Varia didn't hesitate. The swordsman cut through his comrade with a mad grin on his face. No hesitation. No mercy. Toga transformed back, holding onto her shoulder where the slash wound was. It was a deep cut and she was fighting back tears.

"You don't even care about one of your own?" Shigaraki asked with a coldness running along his spine.

"Ha! These trash should learn to get out of the way themselves. They are the incompetent ones if they can't avoid it."

And that was how they succumbed to the relentless attacks. Shigaraki fell on his knees against the ruined rubbles, hateful glares stabbed into the swordsman standing above him. The members of the league were scattered around the place, all fatally wounded in one way or another. Compress was missing an arm, his mask and hat long buried somewhere under broken pipes. Dabi's flesh had been cooked by electricity and his own fire. Spinner was impaled on a metal rod and one of his eyes had been dug out by the teenager with the tiara. He had been screaming as the fingers dug in but now, he was limp against the metal with his head down. A little off to Spinner's right, Magne laid face down and both of her legs were bent at unnatural angles. Meanwhile Toga bled out from just three steps away from Shigaraki.

Kuroguri was still unresponsive. Twice...He hadn't seen the man after he ran off screaming nonsense while trying to gauge his own heart out.

"Oi, shitty Boss?" the swordsman barked into his communication device. Boss? Shigaraki didn't think it would be Vongola's old man, which meant it was probably Varia's boss waiting. He had heard stories about what a ruthless character the Varia boss was. "They have all been incapcitated. If you want to do the honours of shooting these fuckers in the head, now's your chance. Otherwise I'm chopping them up into ground meat."

Click.

A soft noise came from the radio that Shigaraki had used to communicate with Sensei. Straining, the young villain turned his head to look at it.

"...Tomura...t-take who y-you can and r-run..."

The message was distorted and broken up by loud static but Shigaraki heard it loud and clear. Sensei hadn't given up on them yet, the man had an escape plan waiting. So long as he lived, he could heal and plot his revenge later. His limbs felt stiff and cold. There had got to be a few daggers stabbing into his legs because he could feel the blood being drained from his lower body.

Something gigantic and heavy emerged from beneath and burst through the ground. The Varia members dispersed, getting out of the way before they got crushed by the building that was coming down on them all.

Shigaraki felt his body being flung into the air and he landed on rough rocks. The impact felt like it had displaced his organs but he only coughed. Blood drooled out of his opened mouth.

"Master's orders: save his successor. His successor..." the rock underneath him muttered. It was a man the size of a building and he had a mutation that gave him a body as solid and heavy as a small mountain. He smashed his giant fist into the ground, crushing the earth and the Varia members retreated further.

"He's too thick to cut through! Fall back!"

There was shouting and more electricity came down but it didn't put any dents in the monstrous man. Shigaraki could barely move but he still cracked a grin. It looked like the odds had tipped towards his favor now.

"Save the successor. Save the successor. Master! I shall bring them back to you!" he was wailing, tears of pure faith fell from his eyes as he went on a rampage. Large arms swept across the field, leveling everything in his path. He doesn't seem to have a notion of what pain was and no normal attack could penetrate his thick hide.

They were going to escape. These mafia wouldn't be able to stop them.

At that moment, a pillar of bright angry red flames shot out at them. Everything the fire touched got disintegrated into ashes. It *blew* the rock giant's left hand off.

"Ahhh!" The scream wasn't about pain, more like it was due to disbelief. Shigaraki picked up Toga, who was right next to him and

squinted, trying to see what happened. Did Varia pull out military grade canons or rockets?

However, through his blurry vision, he didn't see any weapons stationed. Only a man. One single man with two guns.

"Die, trash."

The fire came at them again. Sizzling and dangerous, the bright red shot towards the giant's head like twin dragons soaring through the sky and merged into one, blasting right through his skull. The rock monster fell to his knees and he moved no more.

It was over.

Shigaraki rolled off his back, tugging along Toga and he saw Dabi twitched to life too. They weren't just at a disadvantage, they were backed into a corner. Dabi tried to get up but just as he did, a flash of silver cut through him.

His head rolled across the ground while his body slumped down. Someone wearing black leather boots kicked Toga away from Shigaraki before stepping on the villain. Coughing, Shigaraki felt like the air was being crushed out of his chest and his own blood was filling his lungs. He tried to grab the person's foot, only to find his fingers shot off.

Another loud bang and the pain exploded on his other hand as well.

His vision was blurred by blood, dust, and sweat. Still, he could see the hazy outline of an Italian man standing against the light. His features were harsh and he had blood red eyes with a predatory gleam like some while carnivore beast. This was it. The Boss. Everything about this man screamed the cold hard stereotype of a mafia man. Liquor and guns, the traditionally masculine asshole with their expensive cigars around a round table of poker.

"…W-Why…?" If he was about to die, he wanted to know why. Shigaraki had no idea why *Vongola* would send their strongest squad to kill them.

The man lifted a sneer. "You fucked up when you challenged Vongola."

Challenged? Shigaraki had no idea what the guy was talking about. The rough bottom of a boot tapped against the inside of his right wrist

before stomping down, crushing his wrist into a bloody pulp. He had to bite back a scream and he clenched his teeth so hard that it felt like he was going to shatter them.

“That’s payback for laying your filthy hand on him.”

Him? Which him? Two faces flashed across Shigaraki’s heavy head. Bakugou Katsuki and Sawada Tsunayoshi. Those were the only two people the League had taken recently. Shigaraki didn’t think the hero kid would have connections to the most dangerous mafia family in the world. They went through the kid’s background with a fine tooth comb! Which meant...

“S-Sawada is one of you...?” That weak and pathetic mess who was cowering in the holding cell? No, the brat wasn’t weak. He froze them and shot fire.

A round of icy laughter answered him. He couldn’t tell if that was mocking him for only figuring it out now or denying that Sawada was part of their family.

“Boss, the heroes are coming.” Someone appeared from behind the large boulder. It was Twice but he was nothing more than a walking corpse. Tentacles held him up but his chest was wide open, exposing the organs that were threatening to spill out. It looked like he had clawed his own heart out.

He fell to the ground.

“Make sure they are all dead,” the man ordered and his subordinates scattered. He raised his gun and pointed it at Shigaraki. “You and your group will serve as a warning. Know your place, trash.”

One last bang and Shigaraki’s world vanished in a flash of searing hot white light.

3

He woke up alone in his bedroom.

Katsuki got up and checked his phone, the one he mainly used to communicate with the Tenth generation. There was a message from Tsuna but it was only a “Ciaossu” and smiley face. Reborn took care of everything then. Omerta. Katsuki knew the code of silence. They might not exactly be on the same side but all those associated with the mafia knew when to help another cover up. That was why he helped

Tsuna cover up what couldn't be explained. The heroes would start questioning things if they knew Tsuna could create ice or shoot fire.

He wondered how Reborn did it. Maybe CEDEF got involved or maybe he got Tsuna's mist guardian to create some illusions.

Seeing his parents again after being kidnapped should have made him feel something more turbulent but all he felt was uncertainty. His parents hadn't screamed at him or anything like that. His dad fretted over him a bit while his mom hung back, eyes still hard and the tension working its way into the edge of her form. But she hadn't said anything, hadn't done anything.

It was weird.

He wasn't sure how to deal with her when she was so quiet.

Their reunion wasn't touching or relieving. Sure, his dad cried a bit but that was about it. The ride home was silent. The walk to their door was uneventful. He had some food and for the first time in a very long time, his mom didn't chide him for choosing something with high calories so late at night. The shower was nice but his mind was still too preoccupied by what had happened. As soon as he got the chance he searched up the news and his heart sank.

People were hurt and endangered. Properties destroyed.

He hoped those fuckers from the League rot in Vongola's ice. The ice was made of flames, pure life energy. There was no way they could have broken free from that easily.
The sky was still a bit dark outside when he got down to the kitchen.

"You're up early," his mother said from the counter. Coffee was already brewing.

"I slept enough."

This was the first time they have spoken to each other since he got back. He was on house arrest for the rest of the summer. The heroes and police were worried about another attack since now they knew he was targeted. Great. Down the drain went his plans of spending the rest of the vacation with Varia.

Mitsuki came closer and she touched his face. They looked so similar. Sometimes when he dressed up as Victoire he would feel like she was haunting him in the mirrors. Her hand was soft and warm, a strange

sensation that he wasn't sure if he should feel morbidly terrified or be nostalgic about it.

"Your father and I need to make a trip down to the office. You stay home and don't do anything stupid. No one wants you to get kidnapped a second time."

Second time? Actually, he lost count on how many times he had been kidnapped or almost kidnapped already. Being a supermodel and a mafia assassin's lover came with risks.

Nodding, he knew he wasn't going anywhere.

There was a tired sigh from his mother. "I hope that you have learned by now that you have to stop."

"Stop what?" he asked quietly.

"Stop the rebellious attitudes and bring your ego down from cloud nine." She was staring straight into his eyes and her hand was on his shoulder. "Why did the villains want you? Why did they try to recruit you and no one else if they didn't see what I see in you sometimes?"

There was something funny about where this conversation was headed, he could already feel it. "You calling me a villain?"

"I'm not saying that," she snapped back. "I know you're not a villain. But that's not what everyone else sees. Have you looked at yourself in the mirror sometimes? There's *nothing* in your eyes. You look at everyone as if they were a prop in the background, like they aren't worth your time. Villains came for *you*, they think you're one of them because of your indifference and behaviour!"

She let go of him, leaning back and crossed her arms in front of her chest.

"A hero isn't just a fighter. A hero is supposed to be selfless and care for others, to *empathize* with people. We were worried sick about you, we really are. But you can't go on like this. I know you think you're hot stuff. You keep winning but take a good look at yourself in those videos online. You were looking at your opponents as if they were dead meat and not your classmates. Those aren't the eyes of a hero."

He didn't aim for the kill though.

What was a hero supposed to look like anyways? Like All Might? But

did he not appear threatening when he fought off the villains?

Katsuki was sure he would never get any answers.

“Sometimes...Sometimes I wonder if you feel anything, baby.” Why was his mother's voice turning quiet now? "I wonder if you understand why people are scared of you. It's like you don't see them, you don't see us. How can you rescue people if you don't even acknowledge the value of life?"

Despite their strained relationship, she was still his mother and Katsuki wondered if it was only natural for her to notice. He did value life. Just not all lives. He only cared the Varia way. So long as he got the job done, nothing else mattered. And most people were just extras to him. He didn't have the time or energy to care for wallflowers unless they got in his face or their blood would taint his heels.

“I got Sawada...the other kid out,” Katsuki said while he casted his eyes to the ground. “Does that not count for anything?”

“He was in danger in the first place because you were weak and got caught.”

That was supposed to hurt but sometimes Katsuki doesn’t feel the pain at all. It was as if he had a wound deep inside his chest that had been cut into too many times already that it festered and was rotting away. The nerves were long too damaged to conduct signals of pain.

His mother stormed out the door. He guessed that meant his father was already out waiting in the car. Unwinding his fist, he turned on the TV, trying to drown out the silence with some noise. Any noise.

The living room was dimly lit by the TV. The shadows loomed in the corners as if they could come alive any second. But that was his own paranoia and shit mood doing the talking for him. There were two police officers outside the house. Katsuki wasn’t sure what good they would do against a bunch of villains. He’d probably be safer at Sawada’s house to be honest.

Katsuki doesn’t think the League might try to grab him again. They wanted to make themselves known and from the get go, Hands had no intention of keeping things subtle. He wanted people to know what they were capable of. Grabbing Katsuki from a camp supervised by multiple heroes was just another show of power. Now that he was alone, he started guessing at what his mother wanted from him. More of a reaction maybe? Her body language might have been intense but

she was looking at him with the same eyes as the doctors back at the hospital. Anticipating. Waiting.

Maybe they were waiting for some kind of reaction out of him. How would normal people react? Scream? Yell about how he was going to fuck up the bastard villains? Or maybe it would be normal to break down and cry, sob about how he missed his parents and how scared he was.

Fat chance of any of that ever happening.

His phone was beeping. Kirishima and the other idiots were asking how he was. Katsuki replied with a short “Fine, going to sleep” and shut it off. He wasn’t in the mood to talk to anyone.

Some kind of news was on but all the channels were the same. Heroes. The League of Villains. More trash talk about UA. Reports on Kamino. Talk about All Might being past his prime. It was all the same.

Or so he thought. The image on the TV buzzed and a segment of breaking news cut in.

“We have confirmed the bodies of multiple members of the League of Villains have been found.”

...What?

He doesn’t hear anything else. All he could do was stare at TV. The reporter and cameraman were being held back by police but in the distant background, he could see body bags being taken away. It was too far away to tell what happened exactly but the ground looked charred and cratered. Like it had been burnt. Disintegrated.

Dead.

The League of Villains was dead.

His heart fluttered inside his chest, pounding along the inside of his sternum. Getting up, he almost tripped as he raced upstairs to his room. He needed to call someone.

But as soon as he opened the door, he threw that thought out of his head. His face lit up while he catapulted himself at the person inside.

“Knew it!” he muttered into the man’s chest. While he was surprised the guy would actually show up here right now, he wasn’t worried.

Two regular cops wouldn't be able to stop or maybe even notice an elite assassin infiltrating into his house right underneath their noses.

"How the hell did you get yourself fucking caught by a bunch of amateur?" A hand threaded through the spiky blond hair roughly and they fell back onto the bed.

Katsuki grumbled a string of intelligible stuff into Xanxus's shirt. He knew this was embarrassing. No matter the circumstances, he got caught. The other idiots were probably laughing at him for getting captured. "...It won't happen again."

"It better not," Xanxus huffed while a spank landed on Katsuki's behind. "Or I'm throwing you to the idiot shark for additional training. Should have sliced those villain's throats when you had the chance."

Katsuki rolled his eyes. "And the headline is going to be *UA student turned murderer*."

"They attacked first. It's only fair they prepare to pay the price when their plans backfired." Xanxus cushioned an arm behind his head while his body relaxed. He looked down at Katsuki with half open eyes. "You're turning soft. Have you been spending too much time with that useless Sawada trash?"

"Tsunayoshi's not completely useless," the blond retorted.

Xanxus squeezed Katsuki's face with one hand and the lines of his mouth tightened.

"Tsunayoshi?" questioned Xanxus while he glared at his younger boyfriend.

"Really? You're getting jealous over a name?" Katsuki scooted up a bit more and pushed Xanxus's hand away from his face. "He's still a fucking wuss that has sponges for a spine but he did hit the League of Bastards by surprise so he kind of deserves some credit. It's not like I'd start falling for him. He's not you."

"Tell that to the trash talking about how Victoire is gunning to be Decimo's wife."

"You're *still* hung up over that?"

He swore that his boyfriend was like a kid sometimes and got the

heart three times too small. Katsuki already made up to him for attending the party with Tsuna behind his back.

Xanxus only grunted, obviously still displeased. Seeing that, Katsuki pushed himself up and left a kiss at the edge of the man's mouth. His tongue swept over those lips, licking lightly at the pursed line and the downward curve near the corners. Xanxus's lips were soft and it didn't take long before he took control over the kiss. Their tongues tangled together while his hand roamed down, groping at the plump flesh and feeling the blond up.

When they separated, both of them were slightly out of breath. Xanxus tucked him in under his chin as he turned over, burying the blond under his weight but he didn't go any further. This wasn't the place and time for sex.

Katsuki nuzzled closer, enjoying the warmth and the sense of security that came whenever he was with the man. It was weird. He felt like his eyes were tearing up a little and it was just plain stupid. He got attacked by bad guys, made it out, had to come up with a way to lie to the cops and cover their asses, basically got called a villain by his mother...but none of that seemed to matter right now. He was safe. His *family* made sure of it.

Katsuki loved the strong arms wrapped around him. He loved the heat and how the weight laid upon him comfortably. Not to mention, the knowledge that this group of merrily lunatics came all the way to Japan just to exact revenge for him (and Sawada probably) made his chest warm.

Maybe his mother was right. He wasn't heroic. He was cold. Stone cold to the loss of lives or the pain of others.

But he didn't care so long as the fire inside him still burnt brightly for his sky.

"Bel wanted me to bring you a bouquet of eyeballs. I burnt it."

"You are a bunch of psychos," the blond said fondly while sleep dragged his consciousness towards a drowsy land of dreams. A few of the feathers on Xanxus's hair brushed by his hand as he relaxed into the tight hold even further. "I'm sleepy."

"Go to sleep then."

"Want to stay with you longer." Xanxus was going to be long gone by

the time he woke up. He was sure of that. Varia's boss was a busy man. Whether he and the team was here out of his own decision or if they were carrying out an order from the Ninth didn't matter. The guy had to leave before Katsuki's parents came back anyways.

"Brat." There was a low hum of what could be considered fondness behind the huff of breath. Calloused fingers ran down his spine, rubbing at his back. "Go to sleep."

"Hmm...okay...just, don't fuck with Tsunayoshi right now. Heroes and police are probably all over those idiots. Gonna raise questions if they start losing limbs."

"Fine," the man grumbled reluctantly. "But I'm totally skinning him if he puts his hands on you one more time."

Laughing, the blond felt his consciousness drifting off to a serene slumber. This time, the shadows were no longer menacing and he welcomed the darkness.

Chapter End Notes

That wraps this arc up :)

I'm not going to write this but I've got an idea for a different Xanxus x Bakugou AU. It's a mix of Tokyo Ghoul, BNHA, KHR, and Harry Potter (setting only, No Voldemort or Harry Potter):

-Ghoul!Xanxus x Wizard!Katsuki
-Mafia higher ups are all ghouls, that's how Vongola stayed in power for so long in the world of quirks. Heroes are still a thing but so is CCG. World is more chaotic because of both villains and ghouls.
-Katsuki grew up pureblood in Wizarding world, Izuku was his childhood friend but Izuku was born a squib. Izuku decided to move back to Japan and become a hero. They still keep in touch and actually have an okay friendship. Izuku tells Katsuki all about the hero course and how dangerous ghouls are.
-Katsuki doesn't think ghouls can be that dangerous (pureblood arrogance shining through
-Summer before his fifth year, Katsuki decided to go off to the muggle world to have fun. Catches Xanxus's attention and gets kidnapped. (Katsuki: "oh fuck ghouls are actually dangerous" & also Katsuki: "that's hot")< /p>
-SMUT, lots and lots of it
-Xanxus thinks he got a regular human pet/lover, Katsuki plays

along cause he's banging a ghoul and was sooo going to brag about it when he goes back to school.
-Summer coming to an end, Katsuki runs away without a goodbye and Xanxus is absolutely PISSED OFF.
-Featuring: Izuku having panic attacks when he heard Katsuki banged a ghoul, Bakusquad as wizards and the cheersquad, and unicorns that used to love Katsuki now avoiding him like the plague cause of you know why *naughty ;)

...Basically Lima syndrome + lots of chaos bloodshed. Okay, I just needed to get that out of my system XD If you want to talk about it, I am all ears.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

“Kacchan!”

Midoriya woke up screaming. His memory was still lingering on the scene he last saw before he blacked out from the pain. The smell of antiseptics hit him, making his already heavy head even more rigid. His muscles ached and his vision was hazy. He could see the blurry outline of the white ceiling lights.

White. Everywhere was white. The hospital staff came in and there were noises all around him. Footsteps, people talking, the beeping of machines...it was too confusing for his brain to handle at first. After some time, things finally calmed down enough that Midoriya was able to register what was going on.

He was in the hospital. He was hurt but the medical staff treated him. His classmates, those who were injured or inhaled the poison gas were all in this hospital too. His mother was here and she left him some cut up fruits with a note to get better soon.

Midoriya felt a twinge of guilt and sadness growing larger inside his chest. He made his mom worry over him again.

The training camp was supposed to be an event that exhausted them but also be one that was filled with joy but now...everything went down the gutter.

Two went missing.

Kacchan was taken along with a civilian kid.

He had been too slow due to his injuries. Aizawa-sensei was right. Midoriya became a liability after saving one person. He wasn’t fast or strong enough to get Kacchan back from the villains. Too late. Too weak.

The blur of brown hair he saw before the wrap gate closed belonged to a civilian. Not a hero or a hero in training. A normal kid rushed

forward and got to Kacchan before any of them could.

Midoriya doesn't know how or why civilians were camping near their training site but he could hear the media bashing UA on the TV. They blamed his teachers and principal for the security breach and they questioned what kind of fate the two missing students were enduring right now.

People said that the villains took Bakugou because his rebellious and untamable nature caught their attention. Talks about him turning into a villain spewed from the hosts' lips.

Midoriya couldn't listen any further.

"Midoriya, we got melon for you!" Mineta's voice interrupted the green-haired boy's thoughts. Turning his head, he could see his classmates filing into his hospital room. Not the whole class was here. They told him about the things that he missed and the state of the others who were also at the training camp.

"Wait, Yaoyorozu you ran into a Nomu?" Midoriya was temporarily shocked out of his worry as he gawked at the vice class representative. She had some bruises on her but she didn't look badly injured.

"Yes." The girl nodded. "Awase from class B and I ran into Nomu who was after Ragdoll. Hibari and Sasagawa, two of the boys from the civilian camp group, were also there."

"Ragdoll was fighting Nomu?" His brain started turning. Ragdoll's quirk allowed her to detect enemies and see their weaknesses but she didn't have the same level of enhanced strength or speed like Nomu. How would she evade its attacks? Did she use the advantage of knowing the forest well to help her escape? No. That wasn't likely the case. With Yaoyorozu and the others there, Ragdoll wouldn't be able to keep up with Nomu while protecting the students if all she did was dodged. Then did Nomu left them alone because they weren't worth the time after Kacchan was taken by the villain?

"Izuku-kun," Uraraka called. "You're muttering again. Also, Nomu was taken into custody."

"Wait!" Midoriya snapped his head towards her but the action strained his muscles and he groaned, relaxing back into place so he wouldn't hurt himself even further. "Nomu got defeated? Which hero beat it?"

The modified weapon said to be able to take All Might at 100% got defeated! Midoriya had witnessed how powerful the monster was first hand and he couldn't believe it would get taken out so easily. Did multiple heroes ganged up on it or was there a special weakness that Ragdoll found?

Yaoyorozu's expression was unreadable for a second. "It's not a hero who did it. Ragdoll was down when we got there and Sasagawa was carrying her around to make sure Nomu couldn't get her. Hibari was the one fighting it."

"Hibari...one of the civilians?" Midoriya asked as he blinked stupidly.

His classmates nodded.

"What is his quirk?" It must have been a super strong quirk if he could take on Nomu by himself.

"He didn't fight it with his quirk. He fought with two tonfas and pure combat skills." There was amazement and some shame in the girl's tone. "He's super strong even without using his quirk. I heard the detectives talking to him afterwards that his quirk is Bird Whisperer. Kind of like Koda's quirk but he could only communicate with birds."

Midoriya had no words. He could only stare at her in shock and disbelief. Someone was an equal match to Nomu even without the aid of a quirk? That sounded impossible. And his quirk wasn't a strong combative one either...that meant he matched a monster in speed and strength with his own physical prowess!

"...I still can't believe it either." Iida sighed and Todoroki nodded beside him. "It looks like we still have a long way to go!"

If a *civilian* could take on Nomu without needing a quirk, then they should be ashamed of themselves for not being able to do the same. They were the future heroes, they should be the ones doing the fighting instead of having to be protected.

Midoriya was still lying there in stupor. Someone took on Nomu without a quirk. Was Hibari planning to become a hero too? Could he be a hero without having a flashy and stellar quirk?

Could *Midoriya* himself have become a hero without All Might's quirk if he worked hard enough?

He doesn't know, doesn't want to think about it.

“What he did was super manly though!” Kirishima said loudly. “It shows the importance of basic training. I’m going to increase my own physical training routine too. I talked to Hibari’s friend, the Sasagawa guy and he is a manly dude as well. He said he’s the captain of the boxing club and he had an intense training routine he could show me.”

“That sounds like a lot of pain…” Sero stated sheepishly but he patted the redhead on the shoulder in encouragement. He might not be able to withstand the same level of rigorous weightlifting or endurance training as Kirishima so he was going to stick to his basics for a while longer until he built up enough stamina.

Midoriya noticed something was wrong then. His class…they seemed too relaxed right now even though one of their own was missing.

“Kacchan…” he started and the class’s attention was on him again.

“Oh right, you don’t know yet.” Mina knocked herself lightly on the side of her head. “Bakugou is fine. He and the other boy escaped from the villain’s lair and are being treated at a different hospital. The police are keeping things under wraps for now in case the press got wind and leaked their location again.”

“They got out?” Midoriya wasn’t sure what he was feeling right now. There was an overwhelming sense of relief that flooded his system as well as a mix of a lot of other emotions. He felt guilty that he couldn’t get to Kacchan in time but he was also proud. Of course Kacchan was able to escape on his own. He was strong and smart, the villains wouldn’t be able to convert him to their side.

“Yeah, Bakubro said he and Sawada, the other guy, escaped together. But they are resting now so he didn’t get into the details.”

Kirishima told Midoriya more. Apparently Kacchan knew the group of civilians and he was Sawada Tsunayoshi’s Italian tutor. Midoriya wasn’t shocked that his childhood friend knew a foreign language. The blond had always been amazing and he was always busy. The most vivid memory Midorya had about Bakugou Katsuki was his back.

Kacchan was always in a hurry and he never looked back.

Sometimes it saddened him. He was being left behind and the distance between him and Kacchan only kept growing wider and wider. The blond wouldn’t stop for anyone and it seemed like he was chasing after a goal that no one else, not even Midoriya, could decipher. He

could keep chasing after Kacchan but the blond would always be just out of reach, like a phantom ready to disappear to somewhere he wouldn't even be able to see.

Sometimes he felt horrible. He wondered why Kacchan wouldn't help him. Why he ditched him as they grew up and called him demeaning names. Why there was no longer a spot for him in those scarlet eyes. They grew up together and Midoriya would like to think he was the closest person to the blond. While the other kids gathered because Kacchan was cool, he stayed because he liked Kacchan for who he was.

Midoriya had a secret.

He *liked* Bakugou Katsuki.

It sounded strange. They hadn't talked properly in a long time and Kacchan probably didn't consider them as friends but Midoriya had always liked the blond. He didn't know it was a crush at first. He was too young to understand what love or a crush was. All he knew was that Kacchan was incredible. A strong quirk, intelligent, beautiful...he was the center of attention everywhere he went and Midoriya both envied and adored him.

The first time the green haired boy woke up with wet and sticky underpants, he had dreamt of Kacchan. He wondered what it would feel like to finally see his own reflection remain in those ruby eyes instead of glossing by like a fleeting wind. *Imagined* how happy he would be and how his heart would flutter like mad if Kacchan called him by his name, not in his usual rough tone but in a soft one like he used to do when they were still young kids.

He wanted to hold those heated yet pale hands and tell the blond how he felt.

But he never found the courage to do so. He was quirkless. While he had the grades, he couldn't do anything else right. He sucked at sports, didn't have many friends, and he wasn't physically attractive upon first glance. Midoriya Izuku was the complete opposite of Bakugou Katsuki.

He didn't know how the blond would respond to his feelings either. Even if his personality was horrible, there were a lot of girls who liked Kacchan. Homosexuality wasn't common in their middle school either. Midoriya was scared that Kacchan would look at him with disgusted looks or make fun of him. If word got out, he would be shunned by his

peers even further too.

He already knew he was at the bottom of the food chain, he didn't want to bet if he could fall even further.

Things were slightly better after they both got into UA. For the first time in a long time, Midoriya could see Kacchan's attention lingering on him for longer. It didn't last but it was there. There was some form of recognition in the blond's eyes.

He had friends for the first time too. People still gathered around Kacchan and Midoriya felt a bubble of jealousy when he saw how Kirishima could get close to the explosive teen so effortlessly. Kirishima could swing his arm around Kacchan's shoulders and not get a blast in his face, could talk stupid nonsense to him without being ignored (yes, even a grunt or a "Shitty Hair" counted as Bakugou styled acknowledgement). But overall, Midoriya was happy for Kacchan. Kirishima and the others were good influences on him. He was starting to notice things around him more and not just keep on isolating himself.

The police and the heroes took care of the aftermath of the kidnapping. They didn't manage to get the League members. The day that Midoriya got released from the hospital, he saw the news about the villains' *bodies.*

He couldn't feel his own heartbeat for a moment there as his brain was in shock.

Who did it?

How did they overpower the League?

Shigaraki Tomura, the one who claimed to want to destroy All Might, was dead. The League was no more. All Might said the bodies were a mess. The criminals were beaten very badly and without mercy. Electrical burns, slashed tendons, missing limbs...they were *slaughtered.* All Might left out the more gruesome details but Midoriya already wanted to puke and sent chills down Midoriya's spine.

Who could have done such a thing? It certainly wouldn't be a hero's work.

All Might said they might be Foreign villains.

Tomura died from a bullet to the head, front and center, right between

his eyebrows. His body went missing from the morgue the night of the discovery. All Might's detective friend said they might have been targeted by another criminal organization. Kacchan told them someone had helped them escape and that person might have a score to settle with the League. The police deduced that there were at least five people who attacked the villains but they couldn't get any other useful evidence because the battleground was blown to a barren charred land. Any evidence would have turned to ashes and scattered with the wind already.

All Might said at least they wouldn't have to worry about another attack. But All For One was still out there, he was probably the one who took Shigaraki's body back. Midoriya was told to spend time with his family and rest up.

Todoroki got a call from his father and they haven't heard from him since.

It had been one week and a half since the incident. His mother pampered and fretted over him but they were going to visit the Bakugous today. Kacchan was on house arrest and the rest of them were also told not to go out alone, in case there were other members of the League that they didn't know about. Midoriya talked to his classmates about the villains dying. They suspected that the League angered another group of villains and this was that group's revenge. They picked a time when people were talking about the League and took them out, showing everyone that the villains Shigaraki gathered was a joke.

But no one had come forward and claimed this as their work.

Earphones: Don't you guys think this is very Godfather like?

Invisible: The mafia movie?

Earphones: Yeah. Like the criminals are making a statement but only those with underground connections would know the meaning behind it.

AlienQueen: Oh! That's a scary thought!

Shadow_Bird: Such dark mysteries...

The media's attention was on the villains' deaths and the battle at the Nomu factory. When Midoriya went over to the Bakugous' with his mother, there weren't any reporters stationed outside their house.

Aunty Mitsuki and Uncle Masaru welcomed them in. His mother went to chat with them while Midoriya sat in a chair. Kacchan served him a cup of tea at Aunty Mitsuki's request. The blond looked unscratched. He was alive and healthy but cold as always. He always kept people at a distance.

Even after getting kidnapped there doesn't seem to be any cracks in his appearance. No high strung emotions or signs of a breakdown.

Kacchan sat down across from him.

"Kacchan, are you alright?"

"Just peachy."

"I heard you and Sawada escaped on your own. How did you do it?" If he had his notes, he might try to write it down but he buried the itch of his fingers by wrapping his hands around the tea. "Y-you don't have to tell me if you're not comfortable."

Kacchan scanned him but didn't explode. "Idiots tried to recruit me, got jumped by some other weirdo and we ran during the chaos. Sawada's hyper intuition pointed us to an exit."

That was it. Midoriya could tell Kacchan had no intention of prolonging the conversation. He drank his tea in silence while they heard their parents chatting in the other room.

The doorbell rang.

"Who is it?" Uncle Masaru got up. They weren't expecting other guests today. He went to get the door and everyone else followed, just to make sure it wasn't a nasty surprise.

When the man opened the door, they saw a foreign young man standing outside. He had blond hair like the sun and warm chocolate brown eyes. Dressed in a blue dress shirt with a loose black tie around his neck, he was also wearing a dark jacket with a light layer of fur around the collar. He was handsome, like Prince Charming stepping into the modern world. There were also two men in black suits behind him.

"Good afternoon," he greeted in fluent Japanese.

Uncle Masaru raised his brows. "You are?"

“My name is Dino, I am here to express my thanks to Katsuki for saving my younger brother.”

“Hi, it’s nice to meet you.” Another voice came behind Dino and a teen with messy brown hair stepped into view. He was scrawny and even shorter than Midoriya. Large light brown eyes and a baby face, Sawada Tsunayoshi smiled at them softly with a nervous energy that Midoriya was familiar with.

The guy was the same as him, before he met All Might.

“You’re the boy that got kidnapped with Katsuki,” Uncle Masaru said.

“Yeah, and it’s thanks to Bakugou-kun that I got out safely. Dino-san is my older brother, not biologically related but he’s still like family. He’s the one who owns the cabin besides UA’s training camp.”

Oh, this Midoriya knew. The land beside Wild Wild Pussy Cats’ facility belonged to a foreign investor who built himself a vacation cabin in the woods.

The men behind Dino handed over a gift basket filled with expensive wine and other things that Midoriya didn’t get a good look at.

“Oh, we can’t take this. Katsuki!” Uncle Masaru raised his hands to refuse the gifts while his son approached them. But Dino kept insisting that the Bakugous take the gift and praised Kacchan for being a hero.

“Just take it,” Kacchan said to his father before nodding at the group at the door. “Tsunayoshi and Cavallone.”

Cavallone. Midoriya felt like he had heard of that name before. What caught Midoriya’s attention more was how Kacchan had called Sawada by his first name. The proper first name too. Even the Bakusquad didn’t get that kind of treatment! It was stupid but Midoriya felt a tiny bit of jealousy about it.

Kacchan was just Sawada’s tutor. It was fine. It wasn’t like they were dating.

He suddenly remembered Kacchan admitting that he liked guys back on the school bus...did that mean Midoriya might have a chance? He doesn’t know and it was probably just wishful thinking on his part.

“Please, come in.” Aunty Mitsuki welcomed Dino and his men inside with a smile. Dino introduced the men as his subordinates and he was

polite. He shook the Bakugous' hands and explained that he inherited a family business and how deeply sorry he was because if he hadn't invited Sawada and his friends to camp at his cabin, the heroes wouldn't have to worry about them during a villain attack.

"No, no. It's our Katsuki that was targeted and the poor boy was dragged into this mess because of him. We should be the ones that are sorry."

"But if it weren't for him, Tsuna could have been hurt very badly." Dino kept on complimenting Kacchan. He was funny and humble, with good manners that showed he came from a well off family. He talked to the Bakugous about their fashion line and he didn't forget about Inko either. They talked about Japanese cuisines and Inko shared a recipe with him. It seemed like he was a very knowledgeable man who was confident and rich to boot.

Most importantly, Kacchan didn't show any signs of irritation at the man or Sawada. Sawada wasn't good at conversing and he often stuttered. Midoriya felt like he was looking into a mirror. The same nervous speech pattern, the familiar way of the slightly hunched shoulder to make himself appear smaller and not catch attention. They were so similar in that sense, he wondered if the boy also got picked on regularly.

But he didn't really get a chance to talk to Sawada. Kacchan was more talkative with the brown haired teen and this might be odd but Midoriya felt like the blond was purposefully preventing him from talking to Sawada.

He couldn't really fit in.

And it was strange seeing the blond chat with Sawada. Kacchan was still rough around the edges but there wasn't any harshness in his tone. When he looked at Sawada, he *saw* him. He saw Sawada as a person and not another extra in the background. It made Midoriya feel a twist inside his stomach.

They went through a lot together. Of course Kacchan would regard him slightly different from the rest. Midoriya tried to convince himself.

Soon, it was time for them to leave.

Midoriya got up and left first with his mom. The Bakugous' guests lingered on the front steps a bit longer, with Sawada thanking the Bakugous for having them when they showed up unannounced and

told them that Kacchan was going to be a great hero.

Glancing back, Midoriya saw Dino talking to Kacchan in the back. The man had a gentle smile on but it was a genuine one. They were conversing in Italian and the space between them was less than what Kacchan was normally comfortable with but the teen didn't show any objections.

Dino raised his hand and patted Kacchan on the head. His eyes widened when he saw that Kacchan didn't explode or shake his hand off. He merely rolled his eyes and said something that made Dino backed away as if he touched sizzling hot iron. The blond man's smile also wavered as a cold sweat ran down his forehead.

Kacchan laughed. Not a cold laugh or one for triumph. It was a laugh from the bottom of his heart and his features softened.

Midoriya knew the blond could respect people but his interaction with Dino was a little too...intimate? For normal people that could just be considered being friendly but this was Kacchan they were talking about. He doesn't DO friendly.

His brain chose now to remind him that Kacchan liked guys. He liked them confident and assertive, had to be good looking and smart too...Midoriya silently compared himself to Dino. The Italian man was richer, taller, and he was everything Midoriya wasn't.

Dino also made Kacchan laugh.

Somehow Midoriya's heart took a dive off the cliff into an icy cold sea.

2

"Is there a problem, Buckling Horse?" Katsuki asked while Tsunayoshi was talking to his parents.

"Hey, no need to be so on guard." Dino waved, signalling for his men to relax. They were talking quietly in Italian. "I went to school with Squalo and our families are allies. There's no need to be hostile. Also, I genuinely wanted to thank you for saving Tsuna."

"He put in the effort to escape too."

"But things could have turned out a lot worse if you weren't there. He's still quite young and inexperienced. It's understandable for him to be scared. He was worried about you. The heroes have patrol

outside of his house and it took some convincing for them to let me take him to see you." Considering Tsunayoshi's personality, that was quite true. "The League is dead. Tsuna was scared that some people might come after you and him if they thought you two had anything to do with the murders."

Katsuki hummed. "Nobody told him then?" he asked.

Dino only smiled. "Family must protect family. Reborn thought this might not be the best time to let him know. He still hasn't fully calmed down from the kidnapping yet. I think Reborn is going to educate him on all the bad things the villains had done first before breaking the news to him. Right now, we just let karma do its work."

"You all baby him too much," Katsuki scoffed. "Whatever, I guess trash will always be trash."

"You really do talk like them," Dino noted and he didn't need to specify who. He raised a hand to pat the blond on the head. "You know, I didn't believe Tsuna when he first told me about your...um, hobby."

"It makes good money. Also, get your hands off me before I tell the big guy. I'll recommend him to cook you to a medium rare."

Hearing that, Dino pulled his hand back immediately and raised his arms up in the position of a surrender. "Please don't! I feel like Squalo is going to turn me into sashimi first if he thinks that I was hitting on you."

Katsuki laughed at the wimpy gesture. Cavallone might be able to fool his parents and the Midoriyas but Katsuki knew the guy was a complete klutz without his subordinates around.

"You're absolutely horrible," Dino said with a sigh. "I guess that's why you fit right in."

The rest of the summer flew by fast. His teachers came by and informed his parents about moving him into dorms. It was a safety measure and both of his parents agreed to it before he got the chance to open his mouth. Katsuki also confirmed that All Might had a connection with Midoriya. They had similar quirks but Midoriya was quirkless before. It wasn't hard to put two and two together especially when neither of them was subtle about it.

He had bigger problems though.

They had to move into dorms.

Fucking *dorms.*

Mammon was going to lose their shit.

He didn't want to dial the call but he did it. Of course, he could practically hear Mammon turning to stone as they realized their money making tree had to put the model career on hold. A dorm system meant he had to follow the school's rules. He wouldn't be able to get his teachers to approve of him leaving campus every weekend or get his parents to fake a document saying he needed to stay home.

That would make him look suspicious and he had no intention of telling the world he was Victoire.

"No, actually...this might be good too. People will want more of you if they can't get you." Mammon was planning already. "You can do sponsors or advertise products on social media. Short videos each week telling people how you are and we can say you are focusing on school for now. I will take care of any media backlash...You told Boss about it yet?"

"No."

"Good. Give me an hour before you text him, I'm getting out of the castle." Xanxus wasn't going to be happy about this arrangement, they both knew it.

Xanxus didn't get mad when Katsuki told him about the dorms. Since Katsuki was still a student, this was important to him and even if he wasn't pleased about the news, he could understand it. But that didn't mean he wasn't grumpy about it.

"...You're not thinking about sneaking into UA right?" Katsuki asked but he wasn't confident.

"Do I look like an idiot? I know what I can and can't do," Xanxus huffed in annoyance. "Hurry the fuck up and graduate. Or just transfer to an Italian hero school through a study abroad program."

Katsuki promised he would do that. UA had a study abroad program for their third years if there were foreign heroes willing to take them in. He could arrange that with Mammon's help. When the day to move into dorms came, a bus from UA came to pick him up. He was met with a warm reception from the so called Bakusqaud as soon as he set

foot on the bus.

“I’m so glad you are alright, Bakugou.” Kirishima had probably said that at least over a dozen times already through phone and texts. “Sasagawa said Swada is doing fine too.”

“You have been talking to Turf Head?” A damn. This was Octopus Head’s nickname for the boxing club president. Sometimes Katsuki didn’t like how similar his taste in nicknames was to Gokudera’s.

“Yep! He’s a manly guy and I have been asking him for pointers about physical training. He’s extreme to the max!”

“I have been running more too!” Mina said excitedly.

“I don’t know if it counts but I added more pushups to my workout.” Kaminari raised his arms to show off the muscles on them. To be honest, Katsuki didn’t notice a difference.

“I don’t see any difference.” Sero dodged quickly to avoid Kaminari’s attempt to lock him in a playful chokehold.

They were still rowdy. It was good to see none of them had gotten beaten down by the villain encounter.

The dorms were big and Katsuki felt just a tiny bit better when he learned everyone got their own bedrooms. He wouldn’t be able to stand having to share a space with another of the loud fools.

He doesn’t know what other people’s rooms looked like yet but his was kept relatively clean and tidy. Since he had to be Victoire in *here* sometimes, he decorated his room slightly differently from what he had at home. There were furry pillows on his bed and soft woven blankets. He also set up a string of small light bulbs on the other wall and used light blue curtains. Adding a few small pots of plants, it wasn’t overly girly but it had a nice and gentle domestic feeling to it.

Katsuki also hid his makeup and jewelry in the drawers, stuffed some more feminine clothing in the back of the closet and kept his stash of daggers in a hidden drawer.

Aizawa came by once. The man stood outside his room and didn’t pry.

“You did well, kid.” Aizawa patted him on the shoulder before leaving him be. He had already apologized for not being able to protect Katsuki back at the camp when he came to his house. It was so weird

seeing his hobo teacher all cleaned up. It was like seeing a dolphin shave.

Everybody was having a room contest but Katsuki wasn't interested. He didn't need a bunch of rowdy teens judging his room and he didn't want them to be able to connect the place to Victoire. He wasn't sure if they would be able to recognize anything in the background but he wanted to be safe just in case.

Also, it was almost time.

"NOOOOO!"

A painful wail came from downstairs and Katsuki got out of his room to check. Everyone else was gathered in the common room.

"Hey Bakugou," Sugar guy called. "You want cake?"

He offered the blond a piece of the cake he baked. The class was deciding who had the best room when Mineta suddenly burst down in tears.

"What happened to Grapes?"

"Victoire is taking a break from her model work," Tails explained to him. "She posted a video a few minutes ago saying she wanted to focus on school for now and it's quite literally breaking the internet."

The comments section was filled with sobs and crying faces. People used different languages but they all didn't want to see her go.

Kaminari sat down next to Mineta and patted the smaller boy on his back. He understood the pain too. The girls weren't as dramatic. They were talking about how it felt more real that Victoire was the same age as them.

"We could still see her on her social media. She just won't be taking any modeling gig for now. She'd be back once she graduated." The invisible girl tried to cheer them up.

"What if she doesn't though? She'd be 18!" Mineta cried out frantically. "She could get married and then she would say she's focusing on her family and she won't be back!"

"I don't think she'd get married so soon..." Uraraka said. It was hard for them to imagine to be married right after graduation.

“But isn’t she dating some rich Italian guy who is older? Maybe he’d want to take her off the singles market and show people that she’s taken.” Mina was gushing about the romantic things. Katsuki didn’t really bother listening. There was a fat chance in hell that Xanxus was ever going to propose to him properly. The man just wasn’t the type to get a bouquet of roses and got on his knee. More likely he was going to shove a ring on their fingers, tell Squalo to get the paperwork in order before taking Katsuki to bed. Skipped right to the wedding night.

“This is stupid,” he commented before kicking the grape pervert lightly. “Oi, stop crying. I plan on going to sleep already.”

“This early?” Kaminari asked.

“I don’t do all nighters for no good reason.” A mission was a good reason. Studying was a good reason. Attending balls or business parties wasn’t wonderful but still alright enough of a reason for him to get his ass out of bed. Getting dicked down by his assassin boyfriend was the *best* reason.

“Oh right, hold on Bakugou.” Four eyes pointed to the door. There was a bouquet of different blossoming flowers tied together with an orange ribbon at the door along with a gift box. “The robots send this in for you. They already did a security check on it and Aizawa-sensei cleared the delivery. It’s from a guy named...Dino?”

A few of their classmates oohed dramatically.

“Who’s that?” Kirishima asked while scratching his head.

“Sawada’s friend, sees himself as Sawada’s older brother,” Katsuki picked up the flowers and the gift box. By now the people in his class already knew who Sawada was. Even Reborn couldn’t stop the media from blasting his name and picture. It was hard to keep things quiet the mafia way when the villains grabbed them from an official school field trip.

He had a feeling it wasn’t Dino who sent this. Someone used his name for it so it was either Squalo or Reborn. He would have to open it in his room.

“What’s in it?” Kaminari asked while coming close.

“None of your business,” Katsuki moved the box out of his reach. He really hoped none of the jackasses thought it was a good idea to send

him a gun. If it cleared UA's security check, he guessed that it wasn't a gun.

If they send him anything stupid he was going to kick their asses when he got the chance. Yes, even if he was up against the No.1 hitman in the world, he *would* still try.

Bunch of idiots.

"Alright, being secretive now," the electric teen backed up. "Is he hot?"

"What?" Katsuki barked. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Come on Blasty." Mina hopped over the couch. "He's sending you flowers and you had this cute little smile just now!"

He did?

"Dino Cavallone..." Ponytail placed a hand on her chin as she tried to remember something. "Oh! I know him! He's the young heir to the Cavallone family."

"Wait, he's rich too? Do you have a photo of him?"

The class's attention gathered on the girl when they smelled the scent of gossip. Yaoyorozu looked at Katsuki and the blond shrugged. Dino already made an appearance in front of his parents and the Midoriyas. The heroes would have dug into his background too since they would be suspicious of why civilians were around their camp site back in the summer.

No alerts have popped up yet. Dino's cover wasn't blown or the heroes couldn't find any proof to connect him to the mafia yet. If Yaoyorozu saw him then he likely operated under some rich business person avatar to explain the wealth. Omerta wasn't a joke.

"OMG! He's hot!" one of the girls, probably Mina or Hagakure, exclaimed. The other girls also let out a small squeal of excitement.

Yaoyorozu had a picture of Dino with her father in what looked like a business party. They were both dressed in expensive suits and there were men in black and sunglasses behind them. Mineta and Kaminari were sighing about how life was unfair.

"Bakugou, is he—" Tsuyu turned towards the blond.

“He’s not my boyfriend.” Katsuki shook his head immediately. There was no way he was getting together with Dino.

“I wasn’t going to ask that…but since that’s your first answer, *do* you have a boyfriend?”

And now nineteen pairs of eyes were on the blond and it felt like they were glowing green like a pack of hungry wolves in the night. Midoriya also snapped his head up and watched him.

Katsuki backed away but kept his chest puffed and head held high, not wanting to show any signs of nervousness. “Yeah, I have one,” he admitted with a small gulp to keep his dried throat damp. He wasn’t ashamed of his relationship but he didn’t want to announce it to the world either. “But I’m not telling you extras anything about my love life!”

He ran off before anyone could react. Clamouring exploded behind him and he heard footsteps coming after him.

“Wait! You can’t just leave us with that bomb and not go into the details!” Kirishima. Goddamn it Shitty Hair was just as gossipy as the rest of them.

“Pictures! I demand pictures!” Mina shrieked.

“Bakugou! Come back!”

“We’re not going to hurt you! We just want to know who the lucky guy is!”

Katsuki slammed his door shut and turned on his music to drown out the dramatic pleas outside his door. They were like a bunch of cats scratching at his door and demanding to be fed.

They could starve.

He sat down on the ground and opened the gift box. Inside, there was a brand new Rolex watch but Katsuki’s smile dropped when he realized it came with a card. In perfect cursive Italian, it wrote a message of gratitude.

Holding it up against the light, a seal that Katsuki had seen too many times on Xanxus’s desk shimmered into view on the back of the card.

This came from Vongola Ninth.

Chapter End Notes

Didn't get to the future arc but I'm cutting it off early to keep the chap short.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

> KHR future arc spoilers. I don't feel like writing a lot of action scene so we are glossing over the battles.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Waking up in a coffin was not a fun experience.

Tsuna was just looking for Reborn when he got hit by a pink puff of smoke. At first, he internally groaned because he knew that Lambo must have been messing around with the Ten years bazooka again but then he quickly started to feel confusion settled in.

There was something weird going on.

When the fog lifted, he was confined inside a dark space and he had to push his way out of it. When his eyes adjusted to the light, he realized he was *in a coffin*. A coffin! It was black and made of fine wood with the Vongola crest on it but it was still a *coffin* inside the woods of Namimori, surrounded by a small field of flowers.

And then he saw adult Gokudera. The silver haired man was emotional when he saw him but he quickly got surrounded by pink smoke too and the Gokudera that Tsuna was used to switch over. Teen Gokuera read his future notebook and realized that his adult form had wanted Tsuna to kill someone once they went back to the past.

This man brought doom to Vongola.

They got attacked, found some remaining allies, and finally, once inside an underground bunker, they found Reborn. The future was a bleak one. Vongola's allies were attacked and the family members were scattered, most were forced into hiding. The cursed Arcobaleno babies were killed off one by one and it was all because of a man named Byakuran.

Byakuran was the boss of the Millefiore family. They rose through the pyramid of the underground society quickly and used villains as their pawns to wreak havoc. Byakuran wasn't a traditional mafia man. He did things on a whim and he had no intention of coming to a ceasefire

with Vongola.

The Vongola family is facing their biggest crisis since the chaos that erupted when quirks first came into existence.

The fights between mafia had also changed. In the future, people fought with flames, igniting their resolutions with rings and used that to activate box weapons. With the advancement in firepower on the mafia's side, the heroes were stretched thin trying to keep peace across the globe. Numerous normal citizens were caught in the crossfire because Byakuran's final goal was to conquer the world. He couldn't have picked a worse possible time for it either, the old heroes were phasing out and the young ones were busy dealing with reforms within the industry after the defeat of a villain named All For One and his army of modified super soldiers.

Tsuna and his friends were stuck in the future. They couldn't go back unless they defeated Byakuran and there was no point in going back if *this* was the future they were headed for.

So Tsuna and his guardians (the teenage version) trained, learning how to operate their rings and box weapons. They didn't have much time as Byakuran's right hand, Irie Shoichi, was commanding a raid on their base in Japan. After discussing things with his friends and tutor, they decided to counter attack by taking out Irie Shoichi first. None of them expected that Irie Shoichi was actually on Vongola's side. The man, with his reddish hair and thick rectangular glasses, looked unassuming at first. He looked like any regular university joe who fitted the stereotypical Asian Nerd category and didn't have a strong physical ability or powerful quirk. His strength was his genius in technology and he wanted to stop Byakuran too.

He had been feeding Vongola intel about Millefiore's attacks.

He said Tsuna and his friends were brought here from the past because that was how future Tsuna and him had planned it.

"It was a secret that only your future counterpart, the future Hibari, me, and the pro hero Ground Zero knew about," he told Tsuna. "The future you and Ground Zero resisted the idea of dragging more people in but we were left with no choice."

"Ground Zero...you mean Bakugou-kun?" Tsuna hadn't had a chance to check what was going on with the heroes exactly. All he knew was that there were less heroes patrolling the streets but they were all on high alert as if preparing for war. Yamamoto's father was back at their

base and he said that he had been hiding there since Bakugou saved him from Millefiore's attack. Byakuran was sending his men after everyone connected to Vongola.

Shoichi nodded. "He can't help with the operations here but he knew of the plan too. It was necessary."

Breathing in, he let out a tired breath as he pulled a jacket over himself.

"After the mafia figured out how to fight with flames, some of them had been aiding villains in their criminal activities. A portion of the heroes quit because of how dangerous the job had become." The modern industrialization of hero work turned them into idols and celebrities, not everyone was in this for the good of mankind. Once the risk outweighed the gain, a lot of them switched professions. "It shouldn't have gotten this bad but Vongola lost the energy to control the underground world with Millefiore on our tail all the time."

They simply didn't have enough manpower and resources to keep everyone in check when they were at war too.

"Bringing you all here and training you is the first stage of the plan," Shoichi kept explaining. Tsuna and his friends were gathered around him and they were starting to believe he might actually be on their side. "Vongola is launching a counter on Millefiore across the world but the main battle is still in Italy. The ones leading the operations on our side are Varia."

Tsuna gulped. He remembered those dangerous red eyes of the Italian man whose very presence installed fear.

The young man before him turned his head slowly and his face was stern.

"If they lose, Byakuran will have total control over the entire European underground world."

Italy.

Vongola's Italian forces and their remaining allies launched a surprise attack on Millefiore but were driven into a corner as the Millefiore general anticipated this attack. However, Xanxus led Varia into battle and within ten minutes, raided the Millefiore commander's castle. Just

as victory was in sight, they were soon surrounded by Millefiore reinforcements.

Squalo perched on a tree branch as one of the lower ranking Varia members landed on the ground underneath him. “VOI! Who did that to you?”

“It was Master Xanxus...” the man groaned in pain as blood dripped from his nose. “He wanted to eat meat but it wasn’t prepared...”

“We brought lamb racks!” Squalo yelled.

“...He wanted beef...”

“We have that shit packed too! Check the other containers!”

Another Varia member dropped and landed on the grass heavily. Coughing, he raised a hand weakly. “Sir...Boss wanted beef fillet...”

“That was packed too!”

Someone else fell right beside the second man and he landed face first. This third minion rolled over, spitting out a mouthful of grass and dirt. “...It wasn’t prepared the way Lady Victoire does and he swept it to the floor and he said…’you expect me to eat this shit?’...”

Squalo could feel the veins on his forehead throbbing dangerously. His features twisted as he slammed a fist against the tree trunk. “That fucking dumbass boss! We’re in the middle of a goddamn battle and he chose *now* to throw a shitty tantrum?!”

But there was no time for him to cuss out his idiot boss. The enemy troops were approaching fast and he threw himself into battle. Byakuran was a sneaky bastard and it was likely he absorbed people with quirks to expand his army.

“Tell shitty Boss to put on his comms and quit mopping around about Victoire!” he shouted without looking back. “I’ll do something about the meat later. Get Stain to check on Levi’s side in the North.”

The underlings shuddered. Yep. there was no way they could say any of that to Xanxus directly but if they didn't, Squalo was going to end them right here.

“Yes Sir!” they answered in unison.

With heavy hearts, they raced off towards the direction of the castle.

All of them wished they could switch places with Stain because instead of being scared of the enemies that outnumbered them, they were more terrified of their superiors.

This wasn't a well known fact but Varia's Storm Guardian, Belphegor, was *indeed* of royal descent. He had a twin brother and they had been at each other's throats since they were young. Right before Bel murdered the entire castle worth of people, his first victim had been his brother—Rasiel.

Byakuran gave Rasiel a second chance at life.

He was back for revenge against his brother.

Right now, the first prince (first because he had been born minutes earlier than Bel) sat on a throne that floated above the castle that Varia had taken over. Being Bel's twin, they looked very similar. Rasiel's bangs also covered his eyes but his hair was straighter, flowing past his ears. He wore a cape with thick fur lining its collar and a golden chain pinned it in place across his chest. A silver crown was on his head. Beside him, was a bald man with dark skin who was dressed like a butler.

The side of the stone walls beneath them was ruined as if it had been hit by a wrecking ball, revealing the inside of the castle and its current owner.

"There's no mistake, that is Varia's boss." The butler, Olgert, stood in the air with storm flames supporting him from his feet. He stood straight and proper, like a formally trained professional servant from an old painting. "They say he was the closest to becoming Vongola Decimo."

"Such a dangerous and vile look," Rasiel laughed as he studied the man in the armchair beneath them. Xanxus was sitting in a fancy armchair that used to belong to the previous Millefiore commander Varia killed. He kicked his legs up on the table and his uniform jacket draped over his shoulders loosely. Scarlet eyes glared darkly from underneath raven bangs as he looked up at the enemies in the sky. Everything so far was expected, nothing out of the ordinary. But there was one thing that was *super* out of place. "...Olgert, why is there a baby?"

In Xanxus's lap, there was a pale little girl around two to three years

old dressed in a frilly white dress lined with pink ribbons. She had straight ink coloured hair like Xanxus and her eyes were a deep red too. Her hair flowed down to her shoulders and there was a pink headband holding her bangs in place. Large eyes stared up at the night sky innocently as if she couldn't figure out why the ceiling suddenly disappeared.

"I believe that is Xanxus's daughter, Your Highness." Olgert's eyes flickered over to the doll-like girl. "He had been involved with this model and there were rumors that they got married about five years ago."

"Xanxus brought a toddler to the battlefield?" Rasiel leaned forward in his seat slightly, intrigued. "Has Vongola fallen so much that there was no one else who could take care of a child? Where's the mother?"

His butler answered again, "She's dead. The woman had tried to seduce our great Byakuran-sama, which wasn't surprising since there were rumors of her being a courtesan amongst the Vongola tenth guardians and bosses of allied families. When Byakuran saw through her traps, she threw herself into the sea during the pursuit and her body was never found."

Rasiel bursted out in hysterical laughter.

"Hiehiehie, my god! Lost to a 14 years old Sawada Tsunayoshi and you can't even keep your wife! How lame and pathetic," he jeered while holding his stomach because of how hard he was laughing. "Is that child even yours? What's the matter? Did I hit a sore spot?"

Xanxus closed his eyes and yawned. The little girl patted him on the chest to get his attention but the man only pressed a hand on her head.

"Matilde," he warned and the girl sat still.

"Hey, only the prince can fight while sitting down." Rasiel raised his volume when he noticed how Xanxus was ignoring them. "Do you understand the situation you are in?"

Xanxus responded by curling a finger, gesturing for them to hit him with their best shots.

"Please leave this to me, Prince Rasiel." Olgert pulled out his ring and inserted his flames into the box weapon in his other hand. A giant elephant surrounded by rain flames came out of the box and it

descended upon Xanxus and the girl like a hammer ready to flatten them. Only, the elephant was stopped in midair as if it hit an invisible shield. Cracks started appearing along the elephant's feet and Xanxus lifted a hand as the shock made its way to his enemies' eyes.

Bright, angry light and heat began to gather within the Varia boss's palm. "I was going to take my time but since you mentioned Sawada and this brat's mother…you two scumbags can fucking die."

Flames erupted at the end of his sentence, blasting the petrified elephant to dust.

"He stopped the elephant…" Olgert couldn't believe it.

"Don't be a fool. Look behind him in the shadows," Rasiel said. There was a pair of hostile red eyes lingering in the dark and as it stepped out, they could all see the strong body of a white lion emerging from the shadows. It was a magnificent beast with silky fur and sharp claws. "It's a sky lion. Xanxus has the attributes of sky flames after all, fitting for a leader but he's still got rejected by the Vongola ring. That's right! Compared to me, you are just an inferior bastard!"

He laughed sinisterly. He might think Bel was inferior to him for having been born second but he had to admit they shared more than physical traits. Both of them enjoyed the violence and other people's pain.

"Hey," Xanxus said, expression still stoic and unreadable. "I have heard enough of your yelping."

"You—"

"Your Highness, please wait." Olgert stopped Rasiel from launching a new round of attack. "Something's not right. The sky's attribute is harmony yet my box animal was petrified and brown down."

"Who cares?" the prince asked. "It'd all be the same as long as he's dead. Kill them."

"…Yes Sir."

Olgert opened another box and this time, two elephants came out and crashed down with more force than the previous attack. Again, they were stopped and began turning to stone as the lion on the ground let out a soul curdling roar.

“Go to hell,” Xanxus said as the flame of wrath sparked to live in his palm again.

Rasiel lifted a grin. “You’re the one going to hell.”

The fire in Xanxus’s hand died out as his body wavered suddenly. Coughing, a thin streak of blood dripped from his parted lips.

“Papa?” the little girl asked but her expression hadn’t changed yet. There wasn’t any fear in her eyes and she was unharmed.

“Be quiet,” Xanxus rasped.

“Oh? You used the sky’s harmonization properties to cancel out my bat’s ultrasonic attacks to protect her instead of yourself?” There were half a dozen purplish bats around Rasiel. He must have opened his box animal weapon when his servant delivered an attack. “Who knew you’d have a heart after all? The dead bitch must have had you wrapped around her fingers pretty tightly if you’re willing to go this far. How touching.”

“You trash are seriously pissing me off.” When Xanxus looked up, his face was covered in old scars that the Ninth had left on him. The white fur on the lion also changed, dark stripes that belonged to a tiger appeared on its body.

“That’s not a sky lion!” the butler yelled.

“Bester isn’t a lion or a tiger,” Xanxus said. “Who said a mixed breed had to be inferior?”

“Harmony and destruction…it’s a sky storm liger,” Rasiel concluded. “There’s no box animal that has 2 attributes to it, there must be a catch.”

Leaning back into his chair, the scars on Xanxus’s face began to fade as he stared up at the two enemies in the air. “If you want a quick and painless death, get that trash Byakuran here.”

“You really think Lord Byakuran would care about the likes of you lowly scum?” Resiel’s grip on his throne’s handle tightened. He cracked a grin. “But guess what? You’re in luck. I was just about to make a report to Lord Byakuran…and the message I will give him is going to be regarding your death of course! You’re too late!”

His bats had Xanxus and the girl surrounded. As they unleashed their

destructive sonic waves, there was no way Xanxus could avoid it!

“What’s too late?”

The sound of explosions erupted and loud bangs of shots being fired was mixed within. There were two solid black guns with an X on each one in Xanxus’s hands. His bullets had penetrated the bats surrounding him and his daughter, blasting them to bits.

“What the—” Rasiel sucked in a sharp breath as cold sweat dropped from his forehead. Olgert was also stunned. Xanxus had taken out the box weapons without using another box weapon against them. The liger stood up and Rasiel yelled, “Olgert! Shield!”

The sky flames and Xanxus’s flame of wrath were both mixed together. That was what gave Bester its duo attributes. The sky’s harmonization allowed for the destructive properties of the flame of wrath to shine through.

The butler stood in front of his master and summoned another box animal, only to see it turn to stone before his eyes and as the liger’s roar reached his ears, he felt his muscles turning stiff and cold too.

He saw a bright burning light and his body crumbled to dust.

The girl in Xanxus’s lap giggled. It was childish and innocent, clean like a lark’s song too. It was such a strange thing to hear on a battlefield and it sent chills down the prince’s back.

“My legs!” Rasiel scrambled out of his throne, which had been petrified as well. If he hadn’t moved, he would have followed his servant’s fate as well. There was no way he could win against that. “Wait! Wait! I can let you talk to Lord Byakuran! We know what you want. You want to be the boss of Vongola right? You hate Sawada Tsunayoshi so much that you declared Varia to still be under the late Ninth boss’s command. Lord Byakuran is a generous man! You can have Vongola once we kill Swada Tsunayoshi. And that girl’s mother…you can have anyone you want once you join Millefiore’s ranks or I’m sure we can find a good enough replacement.”

“Fucking scumbag.” Xanxus pointed his gun at the blond prince. “Don’t make me puke by talking about me working under some other trash. I only want Vongola at its strongest. The past Sawada Tsunayoshi had been allowed to live not because I can’t kill him. Regardless of our internal strifles, when we are attacked by outside trash, the Vongolas are always as one.”

A shot was fired and a giant fireball exploded in the night sky, disintegrating everything within its reach into nothing but ash and soot.

“Big fireworks!” Matilde clapped as a smile crept onto her lips. She scooted closer to her father, chubby hands patting him on the cheeks. “Papa, kiss. Good job.”

Xanxus stopped her from planting a wet kiss on his cheek. “Don’t copy your mother.”

Katsuki used to kiss him after a kill or a mission well done. Little trash must have learned from him.

“Oh, Boss, I think you overdid it.” Lussuria came up and saw the damage to this floor of the castle. “Matilde! Darling, have you been good while your daddy took care of the bad guys?”

The little girl nodded at him and he gushed, praising her for being so well behaved. She looked happy. Of course she was a good girl! Mama wasn’t here so she had to behave. Papa wouldn’t hesitate when it came to giving out punishments. He could be *scary*.

Which was why she wasn’t afraid of the loud noises and weird men. They weren’t as scary or strong as Papa.

In her young mind, Papa was the strongest but sometimes Mama was even stronger because Papa would listen to him.

But she hadn’t seen Mama in a while now. The big guy with the elephant that was just here was talking about Mama...said something about the sea. Maybe Mama went to the beach without her and Papa? Carefully, she tugged at Xanxus’s tie and pouted. “I miss Mama...”

Xanxus tossed her at Lussuria as his expression darkened.

“Now, now princess. You should know that we don’t talk about your Mama in front of Boss,” he cooed quietly while adjusting his sunglasses and holding the girl with his other hand. “Your Mama is somewhere far away but that’s alright, cause you have Aunty Lussuria and all your uncles.”

Before the girl could say anything else, he stuffed a lollipop into her mouth.

“Okay, let’s see which of your uncles come back first!”

Byakuran was a man who could access information from parallel universes.

With this ability, he gathered information and he knew how everything would play out from the beginning because he had seen the events take place in other worlds already. And it had gotten boring. He conquered one world after another, wishing to find excitement and become god of all universes.

Byakuran invited Tsuna to a Choice battle in ten days. He knew Shoichi would betray him and he wanted to use this battle for both sides to bet everything on the line. Byakuran was confident that he could wipe out Vongola's remaining forces but that was too boring according to him.

He lived for thrills and he hoped this world's Vongola Tenth generation could give it to him. This world was slightly different from the rest and he said he wanted the fun to last. Quirks interested him but the simple labels of the modern definition of heroes and villains irked him. He was going to change that by letting the mafia (*his* mafia empire) reign above all.

"Are you bastards still alive?" Squalo's voice transmitted through the wireless communicator inside Tsuna's ears.

"Squalo!" Yamamoto was happy to hear the swordsman's voice. That meant Varia had won the battle in Italy. However, he paused when the hologram video popped up. Vongola's technicians had incorporated modern hero support technology into the communication devices. "Why do I hear a kid in the background?"

"That was..." Squalo's face scrunched up slightly. There was a sea of rubble behind him, showing that a battle had occurred there. "Boss's daughter."

"Hold on, Xanxus has a kid?" Gokudera exclaimed, dropping his cigarette in the process.

"Boss and the brat created a mini Boss." Levi came into view and he was holding a little girl about two or three years old. She had hair as dark as ink and wine red eyes like Xanxus but her features were softer like Bakugou's. She was adorable. It was so hard to imagine she was related to the tyrant of Varia. The little girl smiled at the teenagers.

“Tuna!” she yelled while pointing at the brown haired teen in the center.

“Tuna?” Tsuna pointed to himself.

“She can’t pronounce the ‘Tsu’ sound properly yet,” Squalo explained. “Her name is Matilde.”

Matilde tugged at Levi’s coat. “Tuna servant still owes me a new dollhouse.”

“I do?” Tsuna wasn’t even going to ask why he was *Tuna servant* in her eyes. Knowing his relationship with the girl’s parents, he could kind of already guess.

“Future you promised her a dollhouse for her birthday but then you…you know what.” Levi didn’t need to finish for them to understand what happened.

"How did Xanxus and Bakugou even produce a kid? Why the hell is she on the front line with you all?” Gokudera was pretty sure the blond hero was male all the way through…unless he was wrong?

Squalo rolled his eyes. “Do I really need to explain the birds and the bees to you shitty kids right now? Also, Millefiore is targeting everyone associated with Vongola, sending her to a hero or with some civilian isn’t going to make things better.”

“Hold on, what happened to Bakugou-kun? Is he not with you?” Tsuna had a bad feeling that he couldn’t really place exactly.

But Squalo ignored his question. “Look, the important thing is that Vongola must work together. We were expecting more quirked villains amongst the Millefiore’s ranks but didn’t see any, which is strang. They might be planning something else—”

He went out of the screen with a heavy thud as a piece of rock smashed into his head.

“Shitty Boss!” the man got back up and he yelled at someone off the screen.

“Sawada Tsunayoshi.”

The deep voice struck Tsuna and his body stiffened. Xanxus. He couldn’t see the man but he sounded normal. The same kind of

terrifying when he had shown up in Namimori looking for the Vongola rings.

“Have you gotten rid of your naiveness yet?” the Varia boss questioned in a steady tone. “The Vongola in 10 days time will be the strongest and you are going to prove it.”

The screen went black and the communication line was down.

Tsuna wasn’t sure what Xanxus had meant.

They were tired from their battles and they took Shoichi back to their base with them. They also acquired a new technician named Spanner. He was a lean man with blond hair and dressed in a green overall. He didn’t like the way Byakuran operated either and decided to join Tsuna’s ranks.

After some rest, they had to get ready for the Choice battle. Each of them had to train as their fighting experiences were ten years behind.

“Speaking of which, where is Bakugou-kun?” Tsuna asked one afternoon between training sessions. He had seen other heroes on the news. The kid who smashed his hand during the sports festival was now pro hero Deku and working with Endeavor’s son. Tsuna saw other slightly more familiar faces from Bakugou’s class on TV as well but he hadn’t seen the explosive blond anywhere.

He was with his guardians and Reborn. Squalo showed up at their base yesterday and took Yamamoto. Dino told them that Squalo would train Yamamoto and they didn’t need to worry.

Dino shared a look with Reborn.

“I think it's time to tell you all,” Dino started, voice flat as he sat down across from Tsuna. “Byakuran killed Victoire.”

“What?” Tsuna’s eyes widened in shock and grief began to fill his lungs. His friends’ expressions also changed. Bakugou had a vulgar personality but they were still getting close to him. He was more bark than bite most of the time and actually reasonable to deal with.

It also didn’t feel good to hear someone they knew to have lost his life at the hands of Vongola’s enemies.

“Bakugou isn’t even Vongola!”

Dino sighed. “Technically Bakugou isn’t but Victoire is Xanxus’s lover and he birthed him a child. About a month before future Tsuna’s death, Byakuran took Victoire in an attempt to bring down Varia since they are Vongola’s strongest squad. I’m not sure about the details but they said Victoire tried to kill him and failed. Threw herself off the cliffs so Byakuran couldn’t use her against Xanxus. The tides were high that day and no one ever found Victoire’s body. Xanxus didn’t hold a funeral either.”

“...What about his pro hero work?” Tsuna asked shakingly. Matilde’s young face flashed into his head and he found it hard to breathe. Did the little girl knew one of her parents wasn’t coming back? Could she even understand what death meant?

“He’s currently on leave from his hero work on the papers. It doesn’t seem like Byakuran knew about them being the same person but the kidnapping wasn’t the first time Victoire had been approached by Millefiore, just to be on the safe side Bakugou needed distance from his hero and civilian life.”

“That’s...” None of the teens knew what to say. They knew the future was cruel and bad but to hear the news of Bakugou’s death...it was just too much. They were already stressed and this piece of news was like the last straw that broke the camel’s back.

Sasagawa slammed his fist on the table. “I’m going back to training.”

Gokudera also got up. “As long as we defeat Byakuran and go back to the past we can stop this from ever happening right? So let’s do that.”

“Yeah,” Tsuna agreed in a low voice. His fists clenched tightly by his sides. “We’re going to win against Byakuran and fix everything.”

They didn’t have much time to be sentimental. Their enemies were Byakuran and his guardians, the Six Funeral Wreaths. They all have rings that could rival the Vongola rings and all of them were experienced fighters. The Choice battle came and after one cruel round after another, they were forced to change objectives when they realized what Byakuran was planning.

The Millefiore family was a merger of two families. The White Spell section was led by Byakuran and the Black Spell was headed by a girl named Uni, who came from the Gigilo Nero famiglia. Uni had short blue hair and she wore a big white mushroom shaped hat with her family emblem on it. She also wore a short black blouse with a pant skirt and a long white coat. Only ten years old, she had inherited the

boss's position when her mother died early.

She was the Sky Arcobaleno.

The Sky Arcobaleno was different from the rest of the cursed babies. They age and they die young, passing on their pacifier to their daughters. Byakuran had her sedated with drugs and that was the only reason why the two families merged.

Now, she was awake and she didn't want to see any more bloodshed.

She also stole the other pacifiers, crucial pieces to Byakuran's masterplan, back and requested Vongola's protection. And they ran. They ran back to Namimori and tried to get Uni away from Byakuran. If Byakuran got a hold of her and the pacifiers, he would gain more power and be able to unlock the secrets of the world.

He sent the Six Funeral Wreaths after them.

"Get going!" Squalo yelled at Tsuna and the others as he stood between them and the intruder. His rain flames clashed with the man's flames and they were at a stand still. Their base had been invaded and it wasn't safe here any longer. "Get the girl out of here."

He volunteered to stall time for them.

And he was losing time fast. The Six Funeral Wreaths were given rings that could produce flames that rivaled the Vongola Rings and normal rings couldn't stand the power Squalo inserted in them. His opponent also had his body modified and it was hard to dodge his lava within the narrow space inside these halls.

With a click of his tongue, Squalo knelt on one knee in front of his fallen rain shark and his brain was going a thousand miles an hour trying to figure out a plan to counter. He didn't have any back up coming and he was down one box animal...this wasn't looking good for him.

"Alright, time to finish you off. I still need to get the girl back to Lord Byakuran," the man in front of him said. He looked like a regular lazy middle aged man with stubs on his chin but he was strong. The fire burnt on his weapon and it expanded, fueled by an intense intent to kill as it blasted right at Squalo.

Then they both heard a roar.

The streamlined form of a feline beast jumped in front of Squalo as it bared its fangs at the Millefiore soldier. It was a jaguar with orangish golden fur and dark spotted patterns. Purple cloud flames marked its claws as it got closer.

Squalo let out a hitched laugh. “Not dead after all, aren’t you? Where the fuck have you been, shitty brat?”

“Thanks to you jackasses, the hero community is a damn mess,” a new voice said from behind him and footsteps closed in on them. “I finally took care of all the trash going after you fuckers on the heroes and villains side and this is what I came back to?”

Zakuro, the Millefiore storm guardian placed a hand on his chin as he whistled. “Our villain associates have been taken out in blitz operations one by one by the heroes...I’m guessing you plot that then. I must say, you looked nicer in a dress, Lady Victoire. Or should I call you Ground Zero right now?”

"Doesn't matter cause you are going to die here." Katsuki cracked a feral smile. Ten years worth of training and modelling sculpted his body perfectly. Maybe it was because he gave birth or the flames were messing with his body again but his chest was slightly larger than a regular man's and his waist thinner. But that didn't mean his punches lacked power either.

He had faked his death. After he fell into the waters that day, Fripp took him to a submarine and Katsuki had been working undercover with heroes from a lot of different countries to take down villains recruited by or associated with Millefiore. Byakuran already knew he was Victoire so he couldn't use Ground Zero's identity while he was out there. Katsuki had managed to drag the brainwash guy from his highschool days to help out.

The blond also used his connection that he built in the last ten years within the global hero community to persuade the heroes into leaving the main battle to Vongola. Otherwise Vongola would be facing pressure from both the heroes and Millefiore as they were all regarded as villains by the public.

Byakuran wasn't exactly subtle when it came to his plans of destruction.

Katsuki ambushed their last troop of quirked soldiers and rushed here. He wasn't in his hero gear as that wasn't fitting for stealth missions and was too recognizable. Cranking his neck, the Varia’s cloud

guardian ring shined beautifully.

"A hero acting as the mafia's cloud guardian...is that really appropriate?" Zakuro mused with a whistle. If word got out, it wouldn't end well for the blond's hero career. Heroes were an overgloried occupation but they have come under scrutiny recently. Changes were happening to the industry and people were putting in more emphasis on actual achievements instead of popularity poll results.

Ground Zero graduated from UA but he debuted as a pro hero in Europe. He was an odd one. Instead of patrolling the streets of a certain city, he went around like a mercenary. Where trouble was, he was. Stealth missions, hostage rescue, trafficking ring busts...he took on missions that most people thought were too dangerous and couldn't be announced publicly. He was more of an underground hero than a regular one under the spotlight.

Who knew he was the same person as the frail international model, Victoire? They were two completely opposite people who couldn't be more different than day and night. Ground Zero was just like his quirk. Explosive and dangerous. A tough man born for the battlefield to be accompanied by smoke and steel. Victoire was a rose grown in a golden garden, surrounded by the finest of jewelry and silky fur.

Even Lord Byakuran had a moment of silence as he let the disbelief sink in when they first learnt of the truth.

Zakuro remembered that day. Even though Lord Byakuran kidnapped Victoire, he hadn't treated her horribly. She was given a comfortable room and three proper meals a day. They didn't think a model would be of much threat but they were still careful and stationed guards outside of her cell. No one was to be rude to her either. Xanxus's wife deserved at least that kind of respect.

Well, she turned out to be a he.

And he nearly blinded one of Lord Byakuran's eyes. The blood of the fallen Millefiore officers tainted his white dress red as he stood barefoot at the edge of the balcony. The sun casted a golden halo behind his blond hair as he laughed. He was beautiful. It wasn't hard to imagine why Xanxus would fall for him. The end of the dress flipped through the wind like a blossoming rose as his body fell back into the merciless waves of the sea.

Zakuro had thought it was a shame for a beauty to die so young back

then. To be swallowed by the sea and not even get a proper burial.

Katsuki was dressed in black. He pulled out another box weapon as the purple fire on his ring grew stronger. "I don't give a damn about the heroes and villains bullshit right now. All I know is that your boss is a criminal trying to take over the world *and* you are trying to kill my lunatics. *Nobody* messes with my family."

Zakuro shrugged. He wasn't one to get hung up on the specifics of what was morally right or wrong either. This was the battlefield and they were enemies, all he needed to focus on was to bring Lord Byakuran what he wanted.

So he got ready to fight too.

"This time, I will make sure to bring your corpse to Lord Byakuran," he said with a smile.

Tsuna did it. He defeated Byakuran.

Katsuki coughed, spitting out some blood mixed with saliva. They have lost people. The girl...he wasn't sure what her name was but the Sky Arcobaleno and her right hand sacrificed themselves to revive the other Arcobalenos. With them here, they could use the pacifiers' powers and rewrite the history of the multiverse. They could undo all the damage that Byakuran did.

Teen Tsunayoshi was being supported back to his feet by his friends. Katsuki limped over and the first thing he did before the kid could utter any concerns or express joy about him behind alive, he slapped Tsunayoshi.

"That," the blond spat, "was for dragging me into your crazy ass plan."

"It wasn't my plan!" he retorted.

"Future you came up with it. I'm going to slap him later too. Just cause I fake died doesn't mean he had to *actually* die."

Tsunayoshi choked on air but he stared at Katsuki. Ten years later Katsuki had grown a bit taller. His muscles were also more developed but he hadn't lost the baby fat on his face, making him look younger than he was. He had an undercut but his eyes were the same piercing

red as when he was still a teen, maybe even more intimidating.

“I’m glad you’re alive, Bakugou-kun,” Tsunayoshi said to him with a soft smile.

“Like hell I’m going to kick the bucket so soon.”

"Mama!"

A little girl ran towards them. She was bigger than Katsuki remembered, kids really grew up fast. He picked her up and she tucked herself in against his chest. She had been placed with Bianchi and the girls while Varia joined the fight against Byakuran with Tsunayoshi’s group. Now the battle was over, Bianchi took her here to find her parents.

“I miss you, Mama.”

"Matilde,” Katsuki whispered as he patted her on the head and planted a kiss in her hair. She didn’t mind that he was dirty.

Giggling, the girl started telling her about the things he missed. She didn’t have a big vocabulary yet but her childish speech made Katsuki feel his heart melting. "And then Papa made the bad guy go boom!"

"He did?" Katsuki chuckled. This might not be the healthiest way to raise their daughter but he would rather her knew how to defend herself than freak out and not know what to do.

She nodded and pointed at the far end of the field, Katsuki looked up just in time to see his lover shoot one of the remaining Six Funeral Wreaths in the head. “See! Bang!” Matilde said proudly.

...Maybe he needed to talk to Xanxus about using less violence around their daughter.

Katsuki watched as Xanxus walked over to them.

“Took you long enough,” he said in an emotionless tone. There was no smile on Xanxus’s face and no joy in the harsh lines of his jaw. He fell back into silence after that remark, only stared at Katsuki intensely as if they were almost mortal enemies. It didn’t look like a heartwarming reunion between two lovers.

Tsunayoshi and his friends had already cleared away from the area, going to check on the others.

Katsuki rolled his eyes but held his daughter tighter. Freeing one hand, he pulled the man closer and planted a kiss on Xanxus's lips. "I missed you too," he whispered against Xanxus's mouth.

"Oh I'm so happy our group is back together!" Lussuria came over with a huge smile on his face. "Mammon is back too! Isn't it lovely, Boss?"

"Fuck off, trash." Xanxus pushed him away before Lussuria could initiate a dogpile on him and his family. But Lussuria expected that reaction. He waved the rest of the Varia members over. The martial artist didn't change much throughout the years. He still wore a mohawk and he still adored thick colourful fur around his coat.

"Xiexiexie...Mammon is smaller than the little princess now." Bel placed his hands into his pockets while Mammon sat above his head. The prince was still the prince but his hair had gotten messier as he grew taller. His "princess" had also changed as now Vaira had a real little princess. "Also, Boss has been a pain to deal with since you *died.* Next time you are going to do that, can you at least give all of us a warning?"

Katsuki grinned at him. "No promises."

He got a glare from Xanxus immediately.

"Boss," Mammon greeted and their eyes landed on Katsuki and Matilde.

"No, we are not planning any mother-daughter modeling gigs," Katsuki said as if reading Mammon's mind. "Seriously, you've been revived for less than 10 minutes. Chill."

The cursed baby lifted a small smile. "But we will in the future. Think of all the greens you two could rake in."

"Boss! The jet is ready!" Levi yelled while Squalo waved off the Varia medical staff who was treating him. As one of her hands touched him, the injuries on him reverted and soon, there wasn't a single wound on him. He patted her shoulder as thanks and picked up his sword.

"VOI! Fran! We're leaving!" he yelled at the teen in the frog hat who was talking to Mukuro. That boy might be Mukuro's disciple but he was still Varia and a strong illusionist who was promoted to the mist guardian position after Mammon's death. Now that Mammon was back, they would have to sort a few things out.

Katsuki extended a free hand at Xanxus. Smiling, he asked gently, “Take us home?”

Xanxus didn’t say anything as he swooped his lover up and carried his family back towards their jet. If he had a free hand, he would probably shoot his subordinates for whistling and gushing over them.

Levi already got clean towels and water prepared on the jet. They wiped the dirty and blood off themselves and treated the surface wounds. Matilde stayed with Mammon on the side while they finished wrapping themselves up. She seemed curious about the baby as she had been too young to remember things when Mammon died.

Most of them were alright, just some light scratches and fatigue from having their flames drained. Katsuki had a sprained ankle but that would heal on its own in a few days.

“They’re going back to the past,” Squalo said after he checked on the younger Tenth generation. Xanxus didn’t acknowledge him but the swordsman only kicked at his boss’s chair before sitting down.

Katsuki and Xanxus got the bed at the back of the jet. Everyone else knew to give them some space. The blond hero leaned into his lover’s side and felt himself being surrounded by the familiar heat. He missed this. He really did. The day he threw himself off the cliff, even if he knew he had a safety measure in place, he couldn’t help but feel a slight tug of fear that he would never be able to come back to this again.

There was a rough hand in his hair. He could feel the fingers on his scalp and they moved down, caressing along the back of his neck and down his spine. They were sharing a kiss and it was all tongues and teeth. Neither of them had ever been good with words and this wasn’t the place to get sentimental or pour their hearts out. The rest of Varia was separated from them by a very thin wall.

Too bad. Cause Katsuki really wanted to get in bed with his lover and *feel* that they were both alive.

The door creaked open and they stopped.

“Mama, Papa,” Matilde called as she poked her head out from behind the door. Xanxus didn’t give her a reaction but Katsuki waved her over and shifted so there was some space between Xanxus and himself. He then set her down in his lover’s lap.

“Yes?” the blond asked his daughter, ignoring the sour look that Varia’s boss was giving him.

“Can I please have a younger sibling?” she pleaded loudly, large eyes staring up at them both with moisture in them. Katsuki felt his smile wavered and Xanxus’s body stiffened.

Fran almost choked on his juice as he turned around in his seat. “Please no! No! Boss, please tell me you aren’t thinking about another kid! I’ll quit if you do!”

“Why would you suddenly want that?” Xanxus asked as he finally looked at her properly.

“I want a baby brother or sister,” Matilde demanded as she pointed to Mammon. “Mammon said I have to ask Papa nicely.” She looked confused for a second as her cute little eyebrows knitted together. “But Uncle Levi said babies come out of Mama…why do I have to ask Papa then?”

“Oh hell no,” groaned Xanxus and Katsuki really wanted to curse too as a blush painted over his cheeks.

“I don’t think you have to ask for it, Princess. It’s gonna happen sooner or later anyways!” Bel yelled as he popped open a can of soda.

“No, idiot prince (fake). I object! Bakugou-san please don’t conform to Boss’s whims!” Fran shouted while dodging a dagger that Bel threw at him. He was the newbie, which meant the babysitting task was most likely to fall on his shoulders.

That would be utter hell.

“If Boss is having a second child…can I pray for a boy this time?” Levi muttered.

Squalo laughed. “You want to start a betting pool for the gender again?”

“All of you shut up!” Xanxus growled as a light layer of pink covered his ears. Katsuki had already given up and was hiding his face by burning it in Xanxus’s chest.

Lussuria suddenly sucked in a sharp breath.

“What’s wrong?” Squalo turned to him as he held back a snicker.

“Didn’t the Arcobalenos say the past us will get the future memories?” Lussuria pointed to Matilde, who was sitting in Xanxus’s arm right now. He eyed his boss and Katsuki with twitching lips. “Doesn’t that mean the past us will know about her too?”

Silence fell upon the plane.

Katsuki shared a look with his lover, who also seemed to have stopped functioning for a second. The blond’s hands covered his daughter’s ears instinctively.

“Shit,” every adult on the jet said in unison.

Twenty four years old Xanxus and sixteen years old Katsuki were absolutely going to freak out with that piece of information.

3

It happened during one of the battle training sessions.

Katsuki was facing off against Todoroki and he was blasting through a thick layer of ice as he propelled himself forward, narrowing the distance between him and his target. He could feel the wind rushing past his ears while he pushed forward. He was so close, if he could grab Todoroki then he could toss the guy out of bounds and he’d win this round. Katsuki leaped back, using an edge of the ice as his footing, he threw himself into the air as a blast of flames came his way.

He was going to use a bigger explosion when his head felt like it had been hit by a truck. Twice. Over a road of gravel. Then flung off a cliff.

Katsuki did a faceplant into the ground.

“Bakugou! You alright?” Ice Hot yelled from across the field. Katsuki didn’t answer him as he got up. He looked horrified. He *felt* horrified and the colours danced in his vision.

Just as Aizawa was coming over, Katsuki raised his hand. “Sensei, I’m not feeling well. I need to go back to the dorms early.”

The man scanned him but didn’t see any obvious injuries. He was also taken back by surprise as Katsuki wasn’t one to ask for early leaves but he still nodded. There was only about ten to fifteen minutes left of class anyways. “...Alright, remember to go to Recovery Girl if you

really aren't feeling good."

Katsuki nodded but he all but bolted out of the training ground and back to the dorms. He didn't even get back into his room before he took out his phone and sucked in a big breath.

"...What?" the familiar voice sounded from the other side of the phone.

"How in the goddamn world did *we* produce a kid?"

"I don't know."

"WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU MEAN BY YOU DON'T KNOW?" Katsuki yelled into the phone. He doesn't care if Xanxus was still half asleep or not. He was going to give this bastard a piece of his mind and get to the bottom of this. Right. Now. "You're the one who knocked me up!"

The memories...holy shit he had memories of being *pregnant.* Not adoption. Not some weird test tube baby grown inside a machine. He vividly remembered how his abs softened and his stomach blew up like a balloon and then he popped out a goddamn *baby*! It had hurt like a motherfucker with a chainsaw and it might have hurt less if he got stomped on by Godzilla. For fuck's sake, forget about villain attacks or kidnappings, *this* was the scariest shit he had ever witnessed (or maybe he should say experienced but it didn't even happen yet?). Gods, he was so confused and his brain was throbbing like crazy.

Turning around the corner, he decided to throw himself into the bath. He was alone so he could keep yelling at his retarded bastard while he was in the waters. He was in the changing room when the one sided argument got so heated that he didn't even have the spare energy to take off his clothing.

"No, I don't have a second pair of genitals or some weird ass womb inside...AT LEAST I DON'T THINK I DO."

"Hey! Listen to me when I'm talking to you! What the fuck do you mean we're fine then? It's not fine!"

"That's easy for you to say when THE BABY ISN'T COMING OUT OF YOU! She came, no, will be coming out of my stomach!"

He heard something cluttered to the ground behind him and he froze.

"Shit...I gotta call you back." He turned off his phone in a stiff series

of motions before spinning around. Katsuki was met with the horrified face of the French speaking dude in his class. Shit, what was his name again? Ah, fuck it. Katsuki guessed this was the one with the sparkling belly button belt. “Laser Belly, it’s not what you—”

“EVERYBODY! I think Monsieur Bakugou has a concussion!” the other blond teen yelled towards the outside of the room. Quickly whipping his head back to check over Katsuki, he added, “A really bad one too!”

Katsuki cussed under his breath. “I’m fine. I just—”

He didn’t get to finish his excuse as the pressure inside his skull from having 10 years worth of memory shoved into his brain breached his limits. His vision went black and he slumped against the wall, sliding down until he was sitting on the ground.

His classmate was hovering over him and yelling something that Katsuki could no longer hear. All he knew was that he was going to pass the fuck out.

Fuck Xanxus.

Fuck Sawada.

Fuck Byakuran.

This was all their fault.

And Xanxus’s cock wasn’t getting anywhere close to him until they sort this mess out.

Chapter End Notes

And we are done this arc :)

Going back to UA dorm fun and the usual class 1-A chaos as they tried to figure out who Bakugou's boyfriend is in the next chapter.

Love you all for reading and appreciate any kudos/comments/bookmarks!

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

WARNING: Mentions of MPREG

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Recovery Girl knew it was unprofessional to laugh but she still chuckled a bit when she turned to Aizawa, who was sitting in her infirmary.

“How is he?” the man asked.

“He’s fine. His blood pressure is a bit higher than his normal state but it’s still in the safe range. He must have been really worked up about the hallucinations.” She sat down across from him, softly smiling while she set her clipboard down on her desk. “I have heard patients say some weird things after they have been anesthetized or hit their heads but to think he thought he was pregnant…”

Recovery Girl laughed.

“*Is* he pregnant though?” Aizawa’s dead eyes landed on her, completely serious. A part of them knew that his worry was illogical. Bakugou was biologically male and it was physically impossible for him to get pregnant…unless he got hit by some weird quirk? Given the boy’s history of attracting trouble, Aizawa could already feel a headache coming on.

“Of course not,” Recovery Girl said. “I even ran a test to make sure. He’s not with child.”

Aizawa deflated visibly as relief rolled off him. He would really rather not have to deal with a teen pregnancy situation.

“Bakugou should be waking up in an hour or two. His classmates said he was screaming into his phone before he collapsed. Who’s the poor sap that had to endure his screaming?”

While she may not have spent as much time with Bakugou as Aizawa had, she knew the boy had a foul mouth and a strong temper. Whoever got to hear his jumbled rant must be really confused.

“I don’t know but I wouldn’t want to be them.” To face the wrath of Bakugou head on sounded like a new form of torture from hell. The boy was relentless when he got worked up.

The phone in the pro hero’s pocket went off. It was Bakugou’s and not his. Aizawa picked it up during the chaos and it had been ringing for a few times now but Aizawa hadn’t had the time to answer it.

The caller ID showed: Giant Dick Tyrant.

That was a…very vivid description.

The teacher wasn't sure if he wanted to know the details behind how this name came to be.

Aizawa placed it to his ear and heard a bunch of gibberish. It was a foreign language…probably European. If Aizawa had to guess it was either French or Italian. He was half-decent in English but anything else was a jumble of sounds and syllables to him.

It sounded like a man though. The caller had a deep voice, low and husky like rich wine being savored on the tongue. There was a bit of irritation in his tone, not anger per say but it was the displeasure soaked through his words even if Aizawa had no idea what he was saying.

“Hello? Are you looking for Bakugou?” Aizawa tried communicating in English. He had heard about Bakugou’s Italian connections from the police reports. His student was coaching someone else in the language too.

He was met with a brief moment of silence.

“…Where’s the brat?” the man asked gruffly in perfect Japanese. Not exactly polite but also not completely rude either, very commanding even though he asked a question though.

“Can I ask who you are? I am his homeroom teacher, the pro hero Eraserhead.”

The man didn’t answer. There was some shuffling sound from his end before he decided to end the conversation. “Tell the kid to call me back when he’s calmed down from being a little bitch.”

The connection cut off.

“I take it that it wasn’t a delightful conversation?” Recovery Girl asked.

“…At least now I know where Bakugou gets his vocabulary from?” His mother had also been a near identical copy of Bakugou from physical appearance to explosive personality too. No wonder this kid had a mouth on him.

Aizawa placed Bakugou’s phone beside the blond’s pillow and got up. Scribbling down a short note about the call, Aizawa left it with the phone. He still had to get back to his work.

“Tell Bakugou I gave him tomorrow morning off too. He should rest up.”

“Alright.”

Recovery Girl went back to writing the medical file for Bakugou. They keep a document of all the injuries their students sustained while they were in school. The hero students’ files were usually thicker than the rest but that was a given.

She hoped when Bakugou woke up he wouldn’t explode out of embarrassment.

2

Mina was on a mission.

Ever since their resident walking grenade admitted to having a boyfriend, she had been dying to want to know who it was. Who could possibly steal the explosive boy’s heart? She *needed* to know all the juicy details!

But Bakugou was a very private person with even tighter lips. No one had been able to get a peek of his room yet and he clammed up about his love life no matter who asked. They tried bribery, coaxing, and pleading. None of it worked.

Mina needed to get more creative.

“Bakugou~”

“No.”

“You haven’t even heard what I have to say yet.”

“I’m not cooking you all food cause you fail some weird easy bake hack again. And we’re not talking about my love life.”

Mina waved her arms around frantically. “That’s not what I want to talk to you about.”

The blond finally stopped washing the dishes and looked at her properly. “So what do you want?”

“I know you really like your beauty sleeps but come on, all of us are hanging out in the lounge tonight and you should really come!" She clung onto him like a giant koala. "Please?"

There was a chorus of “pleases” as the rest of the Bakusquad dogpiled onto the blond. Katsuki struggled but Kirishima grabbed a hold of him, wrapping him up with Sero’s tape too.

“We caught Bakugou!” the red haired teen yelled while lifting Katsuki over his head with Kaminari’s help. They raced towards the commons room like two barbarians bringing home a hunt.

“You bunch of fucking idiots! Put me down!” He could get out of the hold easily but Katsuki let them deposit him on the couch. The rest of the class was already spreaded around the room. Midoriya and his little group included. It looked like they were in the middle of a game. There were red plastic cups filled with juice in the middle and they sat in a loose circle around them. “What are you trashs doing?”

“We’re playing Never Have I Ever!” Hagakure answered cheerfully. “It’s Sato’s turn.”

“Never have I ever done a cartwheel,” Sato said and there was a sheepish smile on his face. “I’m not very flexible.”

Everybody else drank, even Yaoyorozu, who said she did some dancing and gymnastic lessons when she was younger. It was just juice so no one was concerned about getting drunk. They still had class tomorrow after all.

Next up was Ojiro. The rest of the game was still simple. People said silly things that they had never done and gasped when someone had done something unexpected before. Chit chat rang through the air while Bakugou listened in.

“Never have I ever kissed someone.” Shitty Hair. The guy smacked Kaminari on the back when the other teen said they should go meet

girls from another class. He looked a bit embarrassed. “It just never came up with studying and training that’s all!”

To no one’s surprise, Mineta didn’t drink. The majority of the class didn’t either. However, they did find out that Sero had a few kisses with a past girlfriend and Tokoyami got a kiss on the cheek by a girl in kindergarten.

Katsuki drank.

“Bakugou, you’re only supposed to drink if you had done the thing they said before,” Iida reminded him from across the room.

“I know the rules, Four Eyes.”

“Oh, that’s right. Bakugou has a boyfriend.” Tsuyu giggled.

“I still think he’s making it up,” Kaminari said.

“He’s real.”

“No pictures, no proof!”

Katsuki laughed. “You’re not getting me riled up to show you pictures that easily.”

Xanxus didn’t like pictures either. It was dangerous in his line of work.

Kaminari and a few other more extroverted kids booed him but Katsuki didn’t mind.

“Hey, Midoriya! You came from the same middle school as Bakugou didn’t you?” Mina suddenly asked and the green haired boy looked spooked.

“U-Um…yes, that’s right.”

“Do you know who Bakugou’s boyfriend is?”

Midoriya’s face was blushing red as he stammered an inaudible reply but Katsuki cutted in. “He doesn't know. The guy’s not from our school.”

“From a different school then?” The girls’ eyes all lit up at the hint of gossip. “Is he enrolled in another hero school? Or maybe he’s studying something else?”

“He’s not in school. Got a family business to run.”

Mina and Hagakure squealed. “A working guy! Oh my god! How old is he?”

“Why does it matter?” Katsuki wasn’t sure if he should tell them Xanxus’s age. What should his age be anyways? Technically he had been on this earth for 24 years but he spent 8 of it being frozen like a preserved tissue sample.

“Cause age difference? Hello! That’s hot.” Mina grabbed a hold of Katsuki’s shoulders, too excited to contain herself.

Jirou hummed as she opened a bag of chips. “But it also becomes predatory if the gap is too big.”

“I’ve heard couples being a dozen years apart and still happy together though,” Shoji said quietly.

“But don’t those usually meet when both sides are adults?” Tokoyami questioned. “When both sides can give consent and all that.”

“I don’t really think it matters though. It’s not like they are going to be doing *that* when one side is underage right? Bakugou might look all tough and got the bad boy act going but he’s a stickler for rules,” Sero teased. “Hey, here’s the next round: Never have I ever had sex.”

Nobody touched their cups as a few blushes formed on a few of the more shy ones’ faces.

Katsuki rolled his eyes at Sero, who was smirking evilly. He got up and walked towards the stairs. His classmates didn’t try to stop him this time. They were probably still flustered about Sero mentioning sex outloud.

The blond was feeling a bit malicious though.

“Hey Soy Sauce Face!”

“It’s Sero! Get it right one time would ya—”

He couldn’t finish his sentence as the whole class’s eyes grew wide in astonishment.

Katsuki had drained the cup in his hand. He tossed the cup into the trash in one swift throw. “The answer to your stupid game!” he shouted before disappearing up the stairs.

And the rest of the class erupted in sharp gasps.

—---

Living in dorms had its perks and its downsides. For some, it was fun living with others their age and with no parents but it was a nightmare for people when they needed to take care of more personal things.

Like receiving packages for example.

Bakugou actually received the most packages from outside of school out of the whole class and that was factoring in Yaoyorozu's orders for expensive tea and or the rest of the class spending their allowances on junk from online shopping.

Mina needed to put her detective cap on. Everybody had been shocked when Bakugou revealed that he wasn't a virgin anymore. They couldn't believe Blasty actually did it! With a guy that apparently even his childhood friend didn't know about.

Bakugou's packages were usually small. Sometimes they looked like clothing because the packages would be soft but they couldn't tell for sure since it was all wrapped up in opaque wrapping. Some came with greeting tags written in Japanese or Italian. The most were from a guy named Dino or it would be from the Sawada kid that got kidnapped with Bakugou.

Mina didn't look into Bakugou's stuff because that would be intrusive. She just guessed based on the tags and shape.

Bakugou wasn't making this easy for her at all though.

Today, Bakugou had a bouquet of blue roses. These were definitely romantic. And expensive. Whoever sent them had deep pockets.

"Is that from your boyfriend?" she asked.

"You think everything is from my boyfriend. He ain't got time for sappy shit like this." Bakugou stuffed the box that came with the flowers into his pocket, out of reach and out of sight.

"Then who is it from?"

"It's from a family member. They think I need something to decorate my room with."

Why would a family member send roses? Mina didn't ask that though because Bakugou looked happy, he even gave her a rose. It was filled with thorns so she had to be real careful when holding it. She found a fallen tag on the ground after Bakugou left and it said it was from "Prince". Bakugou totally had been lying. Those were from his boyfriend for sure!

And he called himself prince. That was so adorable!

They had their temporary licensing exam and almost everyone in class passed. Todoroki got into a beef with a student who declined coming to UA even if he passed first in the recommendation exams, which caused him to fail but surprisingly Bakugou made it out despite his attitude.

He barely passed but he still made it. The examers deducted points because he came off as too cold and brash but he still earned just enough points to pass on technical skills alone. They gave a comment about how seeing him there gave people an odd assurance despite how scary he came off as and Mina thought that was awesome.

Bakugou was a bit pissed about not passing with the highest grade. Ugh, always the perfectionist. He sulked for a day but he was fine after the night. Probably called his BF because Shoji said he heard Bakugou on the phone at night. They were speaking in Italian so he didn't know what they were talking about.

Italian. Okay. A new clue.

Bakugou's boyfriend was older (probably since he was working already), spoke Italian, and possibly rich?

Mina managed to get all the girls in class A on it. They observed Bakugou and shared what they found about Bakugou's secret boyfriend. Possible clues and confirmed facts, it was great detective work in progress.

Jirou even made a board for it.

"I still think it's the Dino guy," Uraraka said. "He sends him stuff often and Izuku-kun said he came to visit Bakugou in his home after the kidnapping with Sawada."

"What about the silver haired kid that we saw in the training camp?"

"He's still in school though."

“True.”

They found a time to ask Bakugou, who denied Dino as his boyfriend just as expected.

“No way,” Bakugou had actually bent over laughing. “There’s no way I’d date him.”

The girls thought he was lying. Dino was the perfect Prince Charming, wasn’t he? He had the looks, the wealth, and he ran a family business.

They found a bit more answers a few days later when Bakugou accidentally ate a few of the alcohol infused chocolates that Yaoyorozu’s parents sent to her by accident. They were really concentrated and one chocolate sent Mineta snoring like a pig. Iida was red in the face as he recited the school rules from page one of the student manual all the way to the end. Todoroki made himself an ice bed in the hall and went to sleep. Koda was crying against his bunny.

Bakugou had four.

He looked relatively normal. The blond sat in the corner with a pillow in his lap as he stared off into empty space.

Mina poked him and he *smiled* at her. No malice, no threats. Just grinned like an idiot. “Bakugou?”

“Yes?”

“Do you want to go back to your room to sleep?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I’m waiting for Xan.”

“Who is Xan?”

“My idiot boyfriend.”

Mina shared a look with Uraraka and the girls gathered around Bakugou. They were still in Yaoyorozu’s room but the rest of the boys had cleared out. Kirishima was going to come back to take Bakugou back to his room later since he looked relatively alright.

“He’s not here, Bakugou.” Yaoyorozu touched his shoulder lightly.

“You should go back to your room.”

Bakugou blinked slowly. “...He’s at work again?”

“Yeah, so why don’t you go back to your room to sleep? You can call him when you wake up.”

“I’ll wait for him. He doesn’t like being disturbed when he’s sleeping.”

Mina suddenly felt like this was their chance. “Bakugou, does Xan treat you well?”

“Mina,” Tsuyu patted her on the back, worried but she was also curious.

Bakugou furrowed his brows lightly. “He’s a dick. A total dictator. Always bossing me around.”

That didn’t sound like the type of person Bakugou would be able to stand.

“But he sends you gifts?”

“Not him. His subordinates. Can’t even remember our anniversary. Asshole.” There was a bit of a whiny drag to his words now as he casted his eyes down to the ground. “Went to see him and all I got was a cheap souvenir he picked up from his work. It’s always about the family business with that bastard. Couldn’t get him to move otherwise, not even to fetch his own liquor.”

“So *why* do you like him?” Jirou asked. “Not to be rude but it sounds like he’s not putting as much effort into this relationship as you.”

The rest of the girls nodded.

“...He’s not all bad,” Bakugou slurred quietly, head tilted to the side. “He looks like he’s not listening but he does. He listens to me and he keeps me grounded? Centered? Whatever you call that. Yeah, the guy’s a lazy piece of shit with a temper and we’re doing long distance but we kind of...make it work? He knows me even if I don’t. Even just seeing him standing there felt like there’s always going to be a guide for me to follow. I want to be beside him, not behind him.”

Mina grabbed his shoulder, preventing him from tipping forward and laying flat on the ground. “You really like him, don’t you?”

“He’s not sweet and he can be an absolute arrogant dickhead

sometimes but I love him," Bakugou laughed, voice light as a feather brushing by everybody's hearts. His smile was bright and gentle, a small blush made it to his pale cheeks and his eyes were glistening with a ruby shine. He looked like he had a taste of the sweetest marshmallow ever made. Soft and light and sweet as if he was walking on the clouds. "He's my sky and heaven."

The girls *aww*ed at his words. Bakugou looked so cute when he was like this. Like a kitty finally relaxing and melting under the lazy sun.

"…Or hell, he'd probably say we're both going to hell. I'd go with him though. He said he'd never let go and I believe him…" The rest of the words were slurred into one and sounded not Japanese before Bakugou fell asleep. Mina covered him with his jacket that he left on the side and she looked at the rest of her friends.

"His sky and heaven…that's so romantic," Uraraka whispered dreamly. "I didn't know Bakugou had this side to him."

"The guy's lucky to have Bakugou," said Hagakure as she looked out the door to check where Kirishima was.

"I think we can take the board down," Mina announced.

"Yes, I agree." Tsuyu nodded.

They didn't need to pry any further when their classmate was so happy in his relationship.

Midoriya dropped the bomb on Iida and Todoroki one night when they were all studying in Iida's room. Uraraka was with the girls for a girl's night.

"I like Kacchan," he blurted out in the middle of doing a math question. There was absolutely silence in the room as he scribbled out his answers on the page. It had taken an immense amount of his willpower to not act out of line when he heard about Bakugou dating someone else. Of course he heard the speculations his classmates had. They wondered who kept sending Bakugou gifts and the answer pointed back to Dino after that night where Bakugou joined them briefly.

Kacchan already got intimate with someone else too. Some nights Midoriya laid in bed and imagined if Bakugou would tuck himself into

another man's arms. Running a finger against the man's belt or letting a hand rake through his blond hair. Lips pressed against lips, hot breathes and whispered love shared between them in the dark.

The thoughts burned him from within, dissolving his organs and bones.

Some nights he dreamed of Bakugou getting married. Sometimes that man had a face (Dino's face usually, sometimes Sawada's too) and other times he didn't. It usually ended with Midoriya crashing the wedding.

That felt good.

Also wrong.

If Bakugou was already happy with someone, Midoriya shouldn't try to butt in. He wasn't a bad guy. He shouldn't be weaseling into Bakugou's love life…even if he desperately wanted a spot in it.

"You like him…as in romantically?" Iida asked, unable to focus on his work either.

"Yes. I wanted to shove whoever the other guy is out of the picture. That's not heroic of me."

Both of his friends looked puzzled, like they couldn't understand why Midoriya would have a crush on Bakugou for the life of them.

Midoriya would be confused too if he was in their shoes. People had to look past all the mean and scary front Bakugou kept up to see even a shred of good in him. But underneath it all…it was unfair that Bakugou was beautiful and intelligent. He was strong and shining like a gem in the light, it was simply hard to take his eyes off him.

"Are you going to confess to him?" Todoroki asked.

"NO! I-I don't think I can." Midoriya dropped his head low. "I don't even know what I'm comparing myself to. And I'd probably get rejected or laughed at instantly."

"I don't know about being laugh at but you are a wonderful person with a promising career in heroics. Stats showed that hero and hero pairs last slightly longer than hero civilian pairs because they can understand each other more." Iida packed up his books. "You're smart and kind and a lot of other wonderful things that make you a good

partner. You've known Bakugou for a long time too. Besides, you might accidentally spill things that you don't want to spill at the wrong times if you keep it all bottled up."

"But whoever Kacchan is dating is probably loaded already. Successful in some way. And I'm…not." Plus they didn't exactly have the best history together. Most of it was Bakugou ignoring him.

"Then you're not planning on telling him?" Todoroki leaned his head on his palm, still looking confused. Of course, he wasn't really the one to go to for expert love advice.

"I don't think I'm going to tell him…I have no idea how to tell him either."

"In that case, take your mind off of it by thinking about where your work study. Didn't Togata-senpai say he needed to talk to you later?"

Midoriya nodded. He started interning at Nighteye's agency and the first day he went on patrol with Togata-senpai, they ran into a little girl named Eri. She was being hurt by the man claiming to be her father, Chisaki. He was the boss of a yakuza gang and Eri was scared of him.

Her limbs were wrapped in bandages and there was something seriously wrong with her. Midoriya's intuition was screaming at him about it.

They couldn't do anything to help her.

Nighteye said the real evils knew how to remain hidden in the dark and he was still too young. Rushing in based on hot blood alone wouldn't do any good.

There would be a big meeting tomorrow about what the heroes found out about Eri's situation and what Chisaki was planning.

Midoriya needed to be prepared for whatever news was about to come his way.

3

Katsuki didn't get a work study even if he had his license because Varia was busy with some stuff since there was a lot of information to thread through after they all got the memories from ten years later. They were going to find this time period's Fran, who would be useful

since he was an illusionist. Katsuki also didn't want to work with regular Japanese heroes because Xanxus told him to lay low for now. There was some weird unrest in the criminal world lately and they were anticipating some kind of retaliation from All For One.

Katsuki didn't know about this villain before then. He sounded like a legend, a myth and a bogeyman used to scare children but Xanxus said he was very real. Vongola also had a record of him from when he was still in his prime.

Xanxus wanted to shoot the bastard dead himself. Shigaraki was AFO's pawn and Varia didn't take that kindly. The League touched what belonged to the tyrant of Varia. Their master needed to pay.

Katsuki found the gesture of wanting to wash the villains' sins with blood kind of hot.

So he stayed in school while Shitty Hair and Deku and a few others went to intern. They were all summoned for some kind of hero meeting and when they came back, all of them looked gloomy. It was probably a big mission.

It actually wasn't that hard to get off campus though. His parents had wanted him to be present for some guests that were coming over for dinner. They contacted the school, signed him out, stuffed him in a suit, and it was two hours of Katsuki trying very hard to *not* stab anyone in the eye.

They got through it uneventfully.

His mother looked pleased with the results and she didn't give him much hell other than a pinch behind his back and occasional whispers for him to smile a bit more. His father saw the guests off out the driveway and they retired to bed.

Even with all three of them in the house, it felt like the dead quiet inside of a coffin made of ice.

Katsuki was missing his loud bunch of idiots. The "Bakusquad" was good at keeping him company and his *family* might be a "horrible and nasty" bunch like Lussuria described but they were still family.

Yet there were times where Katsuki wondered if he made the right choice to stick with Varia. Xanxus was a lunatic of blood and rage and a lot of *unaliving.* It was only natural that he attracted a lot of weirdos too. Lussuria had an undying love for all things cold, stiff, and dead.

Belphegor was never right in the head to begin with. Squalo with his very unassassin-like loud ass voice and scary fidelity to his sword. Mammon was obsessed with money to the point where it definitely wasn't healthy.

And then there was Levi.

Levi, who was a general eyesore and a Xanxus fanatic, was now perched on a branch outside Katsuki's window. The man had packed his weapons away but he didn't look any less like a villain with all his silver piercings on his face. He looked unharmed, just some dust on his shirt that wasn't obvious until Katsuki got closer to him.

There was a kid in Levi's arms.

There was a little girl that couldn't be more than six years old in the assassin's arms. She was covered in Levi's uniform jacket but Katsuki could still see that she was dressed in a hospital gown and her limbs were covered in bandages. She had wavy white hair that fell around her waist and she was unconscious, curled up with a frown since it couldn't be comfortable leaning against Levi's muscular body.

Her shoulders were haunches and there was this quiet nervousness about her even in her sleep. Like she was scared. Of course she was scared. Levi was the furthest thing from having a kid friendly face or demeanor.

Katsuki still let them in. His parents won't notice a thing. Even if Levi was a weirdo and probably the weakest of the bunch, Varia weren't called elites for nothing. In fact, underneath all the strange creepiness, Levi actually legally qualified to be a university professor in terms of knowledge.

"Do I want to know?"

Levi shoved the girl into Katsuki's arms. "Congratulations, we have a kid now."

"Disgusting, I'd rather stab myself." Katsuki made a face at him but steadied the girl in his arms."Also, if Xanxus hears that, he's going to kill both of us."

"He might kill me but he's going to fuck you all the way through Sunday first before killing you," Levi replied in Italian and he went over to the small table as if he was at his own flat. He poured himself a drink of water.

“She’s yours?” Katsuki asked with an arched eyebrow. Her hair was a bluish white and she looked absolutely nothing like Levi. No thick lips, no bushy eyebrows, and no squinty eyes that seemed like she was glaring at people all the time. “Please don’t tell me your new hobby now includes kidnapping little girls.”

“No, I picked her up during a mission. Motherfuc—” the man stopped himself, looking down at the girl in Katsuki’s arms with a hesitant look. Scratching his head, he slumped down on Katsuki’s chair. “I was chasing a target through the sewer system and ended up in a weird place. Kind of like an underground maze owned by the yakuza. I found her in a lab. There's a cheap plague doctor knock-off who is keeping her there as a lab rat.”

“...Shouldn’t you have left her at the police station or with a hero then?” If it was Tsunayoshi or his Tenth generation guardians, Katsuki would believe that they saved the girl out of good will. But Levi? *Levi*? The guy that would eliminate a baby if they so much as inconvenience Xanxus or one of his missions? Katsuki was starting to think this was an imposter.

“Varia will take her.”

Katsuki set the sleeping girl down on his bed. “You serious? How is putting a possibly traumatized kid in a literal murderhouse going to do well?”

He didn’t know what the girl went through but anything involving humans as lab rats and the yakuza couldn’t be anything good. And she was thin too, pale and bony like she hadn’t seen the light of day in a long while.

“The hero commission isn’t any better,” Levi retorted. “The yakuza was using her blood and tissues to make quirk erasing bullets. I stole their data before trashing the place.”

“Erase quirks?” repeated Katsuki, voice raised a bit louder due to shock. Levi covered the blond’s mouth with a hand and they both eyed the girl on the bed, she stirred a bit but didn’t wake up. Katsuki lowered his volume before whispering, “Is it legit?”

“Looks pretty legit. I will need to get one of our men to check it out first but I think she’s going to be valuable. Her quirk can rewind stuff, like heal injuries and rewind someone out of existence.” The Varia guardian nodded to himself, almost proud even. “The yakuza planned on selling this stuff on the darkweb, it would create some problems for

the mafia world if they did. Letting the heroes or government get a hold of her is also bad from our point of view so I'm going to present her to Boss."

Even though the mafia were more concerned about flames, they also had a number of underlings who had quirks…if quirk erasing bullets were to be mass produced and hit the market, it would start another turmoil in the underground world.

"Xanxus might kill her." Katsuki frowned. His boyfriend was the type to eliminate a threat before it could even bud. "Who's going to take care of her? You're a bunch of assassins and the castle is filled with 90% adult males with strange personalities. What kind of control does she have over her quirk? The maids can't handle her if she's unstable."

"Squalo will figure that out…if Boss doesn't kill her first."

"He's going to kick your ass for giving him more work."

"I found him a valuable possible healer." The man rubbed his chin, looking like he was sinking into thoughts. "Besides, we took in you and Belphegor. We have more than enough funds to raise another snot nosed brat anyways."

Varia had no place for useless trash but they did value investment.

"Are you sure she's suitable for it?" Varia was a cutthroat place and Xanxus wouldn't have the patience to let some kid with no potential run around the castle freely. If she couldn't make the cut…they would probably off her. Not to mention, the training was hell on earth intensified. Everyday was a battlefield. Not everybody was made for that kind of life.

"She's going to have to be if she wants to live freely. There are no children in the mafia."

"That's fucked up." Katsuki kicked him in the shin. He might not have had the most normal childhood but that didn't mean he liked seeing other people's chance at it being taken away. Well, what constituted normal anyways? Sometimes that line got blurred when he remembered how the mafia schools taught guns and packed daggers instead of crafts and snacks.

"It's a trade off. Varia protects her and she uses her power for us in return. You know how much she's worth if word about her quirk got out."

"I said it was fucked up, not that it wasn't logical." The blond rolled his eyes. Of course, if Xanxus was willing to take her in, she would be a lot safer. Xanxus wouldn't exploit her either since Vongola was against unethical human experimentation.

Quirk erasing bullets…even if they were easy to make, it would be hard to track where they got distributed after it had been on the market for a few rounds. It was only going to complicate Varia's work since they also had quirked staff so it wasn't likely that Xanxus would be willing to invest into continuing this research.

As for if they would coax her into using her powers a different way...that was a whole different story. She'd have to prove she was worth something if she wanted to stay.

Everybody in Varia had their purpose. They weren't a charity.

"Why did you bring her here then? I'm not exactly helpful in this situation and it's not like we're best buddies."

"I don't particularly like you that's for sure," Levi admitted with a shrug. "I still think Boss is way too lenient with you and all your annoying hero business. I don't like how on the fence you are either. You can't have one foot in the light and another in the dark, not in this business."

Katsuki threw a book off the shelf at him in irritation. "Yeah, you told me that the day after Xanxus first fucked me."

It was fucking embarassing to be caught in bed by Xanxus's subordinates. Varia was mostly composed of male officers and they kept a minimal amount of servants because of the highly secretive nature of their work. It wasn't uncommon for someone to just kick the door open if they were looking for their colleagues either. At least, Katsuki rarely ever see any of them knock like a decent fucking person.

Xanxus also had not a dime of shame since he was the one who let his guardians in that day while half asleep.

Levi caught the book in mid air. He might be trying to smile but it only made his face even more ugly. "Let me finish, you little punk. If it ain't you, there would be someone else. Instead of dealing with a stuck up bitch from an ally family or an actual damsel in distress from high society, I would rather he stick it out with you. Boss doesn't need a political union to strengthen his power. We don't want to be attending

to some rich little girl who can't shoot a gun either. Most of them are annoying and they demand things that are just stupid. The ones that know what they are getting into and how to keep their mouths shut, they don't make Boss happy. Boss likes you and you…are something that all of us can tolerate. Except for your lace bras. Seriously? Who the hell stores poison needles in lace bras? I got a trip to the infirmary thanks to that."

Levi really was smarter than he looked.

"Good to know," Katsuki drawled sarcastically. "And what are *you* doing in my lingerie drawer to begin with? That's fucking creepy."

"Boss didn't like them, told me to get rid of them."

"Lussuria got them for me."

"He has god awful taste."

And he made equally awful steak. No one in Varia said a thing about it though. Not even Xanxus. He just made sure the chefs prep him a different plate.

"Does any of this have anything to do as to why there's a little girl on my bed right now?" Katsuki pointed at the girl, who was still unconscious and he was starting to think Levi might have slipped her something to make sure she stayed out cold. He knew that marriages in the mafia were bargaining chips. If Xanxus wanted more influence, he should marry well. Someone raised as a proper lady who could run the castle for him and do the socializing and give him an heir. It wasn't about making promises as a pair of husband and wife. It was purely a business relationship. Love was never necessary for the mafia.

He knew that. Xanxus was a mafia man through and through. It was unrealistic to expect him to prioritize a spouse or lover above his work. Katsuki also knew that he said Victoire wouldn't leave Xanxus's side until he said so but that was a lie. He wouldn't be able to stand watching his man form a family with someone else. They'd break up (and Katsuki would be the first to bring it up too) if things really did come down to that.

Letting go was something he expected to do when he first agreed to date Xanxus. He expected it but sometimes he still couldn't help but believe in the guy when he looked him in the eye and promised him things.

They didn't talk about love. They *never* talk about love.

Xanxus didn't bring him gifts like a normal lover either. He tossed them, handed things over like he was handing out a meaningless charity like discarding a bone to the stray dogs after he was finished eating. But he'd hold Katsuki in his arms and said things like he wanted someone strong to stay beside his throne. How his lips would brush by Katsuki's as he promised that he'd make anyone that disrespected the blond repent in blood. The beads in Xanxus's hair clattered against each other as Katsuki ran his fingers through the feathers.

If something happened to him, Xanxus wouldn't mourn for him. He would kill for him and move on. The man was the all encompassing night sky of sins and blood and an emperor even without the blood right.

He would never stop his march to glory for anyone.

They never talk about love.

But in the dead quiet of the night, he was the heat that burned Katsuki from the inside out. The softer touches that chased away nightmares and a low grumble of promising Victoire as the only rightful lady of the castle that almost dissipated into the air before it could be heard.

It was close enough to love.

"Yeah. A lot actually," Levi paused, his expression suddenly turning quite serious. "That girl is the one that helped you give birth to Matilde in the future."

That got Katsuki's full attention. He was still somewhat shocked by the future memories of having a daughter. His and Xanxus's daughter nonetheless. They had a family in the future. Xanxus kept his words, only Victoire got to stand beside him. "...What?"

"Not sure if you have those memories because in the future you will be pretty out of it in the delivery room but yeah, she's the reason why no one managed to put two and two together. She's the reason why you were kicking drug traffickers' asses two days after giving birth." Yawning, Levi set the book down. "Even if it weren't for anything else, I'd still take her back to Varia just for that. I'd do *anything* to ensure Boss's daughter gets safely delivered into this world."

Katsuki wasn't sure what he should say then. That might be the nicest

thing he had ever heard from Levi's mouth. There was a small flash of a memory from the future where Levi literally worshiped the ground that Matilde and Xanxus walked on.

"You're not jealous about someone else getting Xanxus's attention?"

"Why would I be? It's his daughter we're talking about. And you…" He pondered for a moment before sighing heavily. "You're not exactly a guardian yet and in case you haven't noticed, you serve a different role to fulfill Boss's other needs. It's not like we're in competition with each other. You keep doing you and keep the annoying flies eyeing the boss's wife's position away from Xanxus and we're good."

Standing up, Levi walked closer to him, his slant eyes focusing on Katsuki's stomach.

"If there's one thing that needs improvement though…can you give Boss a son after Matilde?"

Katsuki punched him on the arm and snarled. "I'm sixteen you idiot. It's too early to be talking about children. Besides, I don't control the gender! At least I don't think I do? Isn't that dependent on the dad's sperm? Wait, Xanxus still hasn't told me how the hell we conceived a kid yet. Fuck, this is giving me a headache!"

His memories of the future were hazy. It was mostly centered around Byakuran and hero work. His brain might have thought that ten years worth of memories was too much for it to handle so it only selected the most important pieces of information to retain. He would really have to dig into his own brain to figure out the how and the why but Katsuki had been too scared to dive into that subject.

Levi rubbed his own temple. "I don't really know how you two did it. All I know is that Boss's daughter is the *best* thing god has ever created so we need her—" He gestured to the girl. "Alive and belonging to Varia."

"So what do you need me to do?"

"Call Boss, get him to not blast me and the brat on sight when we return."

"…Why would you need that?" Xanxus was moody but not unreasonable. He wouldn't kill a kid within seconds of meeting them if they weren't his targets or insulted him somehow.

“Cause if the data that the yakuza has on her is right, she can’t control her quirk yet and she rewinded her dad out of existence.”

“In other words, she’s a dangerous time bomb,” Katsuki concluded. This definitely won’t sit well with Xanxus or Squalo. There was also the problem of the elders in Vongola. They might get some funny ideas if they knew what she could do.

“Yep.”

“And you still want to keep her?”

“I think we might be able to contain her with a bit of rain flame. Would have to get our tech guys to check it out though. My lightning flame also stopped her rewinding slightly when I first found her. See.” Levi held up his hand, there was nothing wrong with it…the skin looked a bit less marked up with scars, which was normal considering Levi trained and worked hard. “She rewinded my hand about a week back. I’m missing a scar.”

“Vongola is going to sit by and let us work with her?”

“They don’t have to know what she can do,” Levi said simply. “And if people started asking questions we’ll say that she’s Squalo’s bastard or something. Mammon’s going to start selling fake gossips of Victoire hooking up with Xanxus’s right hand man for sure if that came up. The girl’s eyes are red,” he added when he saw the confusion on Katsuki’s face.

Katsuki huffed, almost laughing as he kept a straight face. “Xanxus isn’t going to be happy about that.”

“You and Squalo are the ones that’s going to take the blunt of his anger so I’m all for it.” Levi handed Katsuki his phone with Xanxus’s number predialed. “If we get Matilde early, I’m not complaining either.”

“That’s not happening,” Katsuki said as he snatched the phone from Levi. “I’m putting Xanxus on a sabbatical from sex until we figure out how he knocked me up.”

Levi scoffed at him, not believing a word he said cause they all knew that if Xanxus wanted, Katsuki would eventually let him. “Are you going to help keep the girl or not? If not, I’ll get rid of her right now.”

His “get rid” definitely meant “kill”. There was no way Varia would be

nice enough to leave her in front of a police station.

“She ain’t got any family?”

“Anyone that doesn't want her as a lab rat and can take care of her properly? No.”

Katsuki pressed the call button. “If she’s dead the next time I visit, I’m going to shove poison needles into your umbrellas.”

“They aren’t umbrellas, you damn whore.” Levi protested. Those were his weapons that could help control lightning, not some flimsy little regular umbrellas. It was probably a good thing they had been conversing in Italian cause otherwise it would be super bad if the kid could understand them.

Katsuki didn’t particularly like this set up. Here was a little girl that came from a lab, who was probably traumatized to a certain degree and they were about to ship her off to the darkest part mafia society had to offer. She was going to be on foreign land, most likely didn’t speak the language, and with no friends her age to be around for a while.

But she would get to live free and receive proper education…mafia standard proper education that was. Katsuki wasn’t sure if this was the right thing to do or if this would be the best thing for her but if there was one thing that he knew for a fact was that Varia took care of their own.

The blond brushed the bangs out of the sleeping girl’s eyes and pulled his blankets over her shoulders.

“Welcome to the family, kid. Rule number 1: Don’t die.”

Chapter End Notes

Love is complicated but hey, we got some guardians bonding time? Also poor Dino...XD I'm mean to him.

Future Eri sort of made a cameo in the future arc but it's very very subtle.

Going to be busy for a while so my updates for all my fics are going to be really and extra irregular. Comments are motivating and thank you all for reading!

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Dreams were supposed to be a private place.

Apparently now he needed locks and keys and chains (and possibly some bob wires) to keep his dreamland a safe place from invaders.

Katsuki knew he was dreaming. He was standing on the streets of Italy when he knew for sure he went to bed in his dorm. There was slow jazz music and laughter from the restaurant around the corner. He was dressed as Victoire, in a short little red skirt and a dark long sleeve top that had lace for its back.

Turning around, he found Xanxus waiting underneath a street light with his arms crossed in front of his chest. The man lifted his chin at Katsuki.

“Hurry up, trash.”

The blond’s feet moved on their own upon hearing the command. He was used to his lover’s bossy attitudes.

“Xanxus,” Katsuki called with a bright smile on his face. Getting on his tiptoes, he pressed a kiss on the corner of his lover’s lips. An arm wrapped around his waist and Katsuki tilted his head, his lips hovering directly over Xanxus’s as he wrapped around the man’s neck.

The blond’s hands dipped lower and red dripped onto the ground.

Crimson stains blossomed on the back of Xanxus’s white dress shirt. The dark haired man’s eyes were wide, blood filled his throat as the dagger in his back dug in deeper while Katsuki pressed their bodies closer together. Glossy pink lips covered Xanxus’s pale ones as the blood spilled between their connected mouths.

Katsuki pulled the dagger out and Xanxus dropped to the ground.

The people around them froze. No screaming, no yelling, not even a twitch to their expressions. They were frozen in time like someone

had hit pause on the video, still as statues as Katsuki smired the blood across his own lips like he was applying lipstick with his thumb.

His heels clicked against the pavement as he turned around.

“Are you going to come out?”

"You really are cold hearted," someone else said from behind him. “Kufufufu…what gave it away?”

“My perfume, it’s Victoire’s signature brand but Xanxus doesn’t like the smell of this one. If we were out on a date, I wouldn’t be wearing it.”

The person in the shadows halted in their steps, seeming to be thinking for a second. “I don’t know if I should find that insulting to my abilities or not. I replicated everything perfectly.”

Katsuki shrugged. “Also, there’s no way that Xanxus would die so easily. He’d snap my neck before that dagger even made it to his back. What do you want, Rokudo Mukuro?”

The teen came out of the shadows and with a snap of his fingers, all the people on the street vanished along with Xanxus’s body. He had dark blue hair that oddly resembled pineapple in style and his eyes were like Ice Hot, heterochromatic. Red for his right eye and blue for his left. He was slender and fairly tall, dressed in a simple green student uniform too.

“I was taking a stroll on my way back from hell but then I got bored so here I am.”

“Can’t you go bother Tsunayoshi instead?” They had never talked to each other before. Katsuki wasn’t sure why the illusionist, Sawada Tsunayoshi’s mist guardian, would want to talk to him.

Rokudo Mukuro was a strange one. He grew up in the mafia but his family was crazy for power. They used their children for human experimentation and Rokudo Mukuro was their victim. Thus, he hated all of the mafia and was reluctant to become Tsunayoshi’s guardian.

The last Katsuki heard about the guy was that he was being imprisoned by the Vindice, mafia’s version of Tartarus prison. It was a place reserved for criminals that even the goddamn mafia found too heinous to let loose. They tied Rokudo Mukuro up like they were treating the Joker and chained him before tossing him into a water

prison, sedated and kept alive by machines.

But the guy was an illusionist and there was some paranormal stuff going on with him too so he was able to wander through people's dreams, even possess a few people.

"I have other plans for Sawada Tsunayoshi and you were closer."

Katsuki twirled around and the scenery around them crumbled. The pavement became grass and flowers while the brick buildings became trees. There was a long table that popped up, covered with desserts and tea.

"What did you do?" Rokudo Mukuro frowned.

"This is supposed to be my dream, you dumbass." Katsuki sat down at the head of the table without a care in the world. He spent so much time with Mammon, of course he picked up a few things. He couldn't make illusions but he knew how to control his own demons and inner unconscious space. "I can make it whatever the hell I want."

"Such a vindictive and spiteful personality, no wonder you fit right in with Varia." Rokudo Mukuro sat down across from Katsuki with a small chuckle. "At least you have more hospitality than others."

Katsuki poured himself a cup of tea and the illusionist served himself too.

"You're a little different from what I imagined," he said after a few minutes. "I imagined you to be more…well, less Victoire and more hot headed Bakugou Katsuki probably. Doesn't it ever get confusing about which side is the real you?"

"They're both me," Katsuki answered briefly. "Which face I wear is according to the situation and my needs."

"More like Xanxus's needs," he scuffled with a bit of contempt. The guy really did hate the mafia and all of the darkness it came with. Xanxus and Varia were prime examples of that darkness. "Do you know what the mafia thinks of Victoire? They think you're gunning to be the Decimo's wife, no matter the outcome of who ends up on that thorne."

Katsuki grinned at him, small sparks igniting off his palms. "I will have you know I can still kick ass in heels."

The illusionist leaned his head on his palm. “So I’ve heard. Sawada Tsunayoshi seems to think highly of you, even though you are probably far from heroic.”

“Yet I’m the one in the best hero course in the country and top of my class. Suck it up.”

Rokudo Mukuro laughed and a playful smile made it onto his face. “Those heroes must be blind. They can’t see this apathetic side of you and oh my, what would happen if someone was to rat out your little relationship with Varia’s boss to the heroes?”

“Are you threatening me?”

“Not exactly.”

Rokudo Mukuro vanished from his spot. Katsuki pulled out his dagger and his hand flared up, only to be pinned down on the table between the two points of the illusionist’s trident.

“You don’t have the hyper intuition like Vongola or Xanxus,” murmured Rokudo Mukuro as his body began to gain a concrete form behind Katsuki, who was still sitting down. “Good try though, if I had a body I would probably be dead.”

His eyes casted down to his other hand that was placed on Katsuki’s shoulder. There was a thin needle stuck into his flesh. Poisoned.

“It’s just anesthetics,” Katsuki said in an even voice.

“You show mercy in weird places.”

“I’m a fucking hero.”

Rokudo Mukuro tilted Katsuki’s head up and the blond was gazing into those mismatched eyes. “Exactly, a shining bright star and an international model with influence. Plus, you’re dating Varia’s boss and you’re friends with the next official Decimo candidate…now, doesn’t that sound like a valuable body to possess?”

“Are you going to give up on taking over Tsunayoshi’s body and take mine instead?” Katsuki had heard about Rokudo Mukuro’s plans before Tsuna defeated him. The illusionist thought this world was wrong and he wanted to take over Vongola Decimo’s body so he could start a world war, a complete annihilation of the mafia and using destruction to create new peace and order.

“It’s enticing isn’t it?” He smiled, voice sickly sweet too. “If you killed Sawada or Xanxus and claimed it to be for the other…Vongola is going to tear itself apart without me having to put in any work. Even better if you killed the Ninth and announce to the world how a hero in training took down the Godfather.”

“Before you do it, you should know about the Shie Hassaikai.”

“What’s that?”

“A yakuza group,” Katsuki replied nonchalantly, staring at the younger teen’s face with the same furious nature he always had. “Their boss had this quirk that can break down and fix things. He was keeping a little girl in their labs. Took her blood and tissues to make special bullets and sold it on the market.”

Rokudo Mukuro’s hand on Katsuki’s shoulder tightened.

The blond smiled, voice dipping lower into a quieter ghostly whisper. “Broke her down and fixed her, over and over again. Gaslight the shit outta her too, said she’s cursed and bad luck, only worth something if she listened to him like a good lap dog. Real villainous, isn’t he? You don’t hear much about these kinds of crimes on the news.”

“Why are you telling me this?” The words sounded like they were grinded through his teeth.

"Kill them, drive them crazy, ignore it, I don't know and I don't really care either. You do whatever you want, whenever you want."

Rokudo Mukuro huffed but released Katsuki. "You say that when you know full well what I have gone through as a kid?”

"You came into my dream first and made me kill my boyfriend."

"He was an illusion."

"You made me kill the illusionary version of my boyfriend and that caused emotional damages.”

The younger teen scanned Katsuki from head to toe, puzzled. "I planned on taking over your body and your main concern is that I made you kill a fake version of Xanxus?”

Katsuki rolled his eyes. “Yeah, got a problem with it?”

“You’re insane.”

“Like you're normal?”

They glared at each other for a long silent moment before Rokudo Mukuro sighed. He grumbled something about should have gone to Sawada’s dream instead but plopped himself down in a chair next to Kastuki.

“Where’s the girl now? And what made her so special that her body parts can be made into bullets?”

“She’s not with the yakuza anymore but the villains are going to be looking for her. The bullets can erase quirks. Figure out the rest yourself.” Katsuki knew the illusionist wasn’t dumb, he could put two and two together.

“Kufufufu…what do I get out of this?”

“I don’t know what the yakuza have. They might not be as great as before All Might’s period but they would still have some kind of fortune left. Take everything and leave them with nothing.”

“That really isn’t something a hero should be saying,” Rokudo Mukuro said with amusement. “And I don’t work with the mafia.”

Katsuki smoothed out his skirt and smiled beautifully. “I’m not a hero yet or part of the mafia right now, I’m Victoire the civilian model. My heart is broken over the poor little girl being tormented by people who are supposed to be her family. What kind of animal could do such a thing to a child?”

He dabbed away invisible tears with a handkerchief. His tone was filled with hurt and worry, sadness and sorrow that seemed to run so deep within those soft words. But his expression was the complete opposite of what his voice implied. A wicked smile tainted with apathy, his smile was dazzling with a kind of malicious beauty.

He was a flower blooming from the soil of sins and watered with blood, yet radiating like the sun.

How long would that light last in this crazy world?

Rokudo Mukuro gave him a lopsided grin. When it came down to acting, the illusionist was an expert. He grabbed one of Katsuki’s hands and left a proper gentleman kiss on the back of the blond’s hand. As much as Rokudo Mukuro disliked his upbringing, he still had mafia blood in his veins. A proper Italian gentleman would treat a

lady with respect.

“Let’s play a hero game then,” he said calmly. “Justice will be served.”

2

Eri wasn’t in the yakuza’s main hideout.

The heroes gathered their ranks and the police coordinated a plan. However, two hours before the raid, they started noticing that there was commotion coming from the yakuzas. They looked like they were searching for something.

Or someone.

The heroes didn’t find Eri in the Yakuza’s headquarters that day. Instead, they found a room with a bunch of fried lab equipment and computers. There were some blood and tissue samples that belonged to a girl but everything would be circumstantial evidence at best if not for the clues the heroes gathered beforehand.

It was still a hard fought battle because the police were able to match the samples found in the lab to the tissues found in the quirk erasing bullets afterwards. Chisaki and his goons anticipated that, which was why they resisted arrest.

When asked where his daughter was, Chisaki couldn't answer. He seemed frustrated too.

Togata-senpai almost lost his quirk but he saved Nighteye from getting impaled by the villain's attack. In the end, despite everybody’s best efforts, Chisaki got away. The heroes and police apprehended his subordinates but the main culprit still remained in the wind.

Now the mystery of Eri's whereabouts remained.

It had been ten days since then and no one had found Eri yet.

“Someone else took her," Nighteye concluded as they all sat in the debriefing room. A heavy air was clouding the room. The heroes weren’t sure how they should feel about the situation. On one hand they did take down a bunch of villains but they also didn’t achieve their main goal. “There was a third party involved and they took her.”

The heads of other hero agencies along with a few representatives from the police and hero commission were all here. The UA students

weren't supposed to be here but they had begged the pro heroes that took them in to let them listen in.

Almost everybody involved in the raid had some degree of injuries. Kirishima was bandaged up like a mummy and Amajiki-senpai declined to join the meeting. Midoriya himself had his left arm in a sling and Mirio senpai had bandages around his head.

Even Sir Nighteye looked paler than normal.

Emotions were everywhere too. Disappointment, fatigue, the after effects of going on heavy pain medication, and of course, frustration all made the atmosphere too suffocating to breathe properly.

This raid was a colossal failure with a giant red X on top, a disaster with giant neon green sign tapdancing on their already sensitive nerves. They didn't save Eri and they didn't manage to capture Chisaki Kai, who was the most dangerous of this group of yakuza.

Of course, there were search parties and amber alerts along with wanted posters being posted to hero forums. Still, despite their best efforts, it seemed like both Eri and Chisaki had melted into the wind. Invisible and impossible to trace.

"What made you so sure? Maybe she ran on her own?" Rock Lock leaned back in his chair, a slight shadow blended into his grim expression. He had a wife and a kid so he wasn't particularly happy that they didn't manage to secure Eri. "She did it before, didn't she?"

Midoriya's fists tightened in his lap. She did. She tried to get away from the men hurting her yet he could only watch her return to the villain's side.

And now no one knew where she was. If she was safe, if she was hungry and cold and confused in some dark corner.

Worse. If she was even still *alive*.

Bubble Girl got up and moved over to the monitor at the front of the room. "Three days ago, the police located a body in a shipping container in the river. The dental records matched him to a man named Yamane Norio. Yamane was suspected to be involved with foreign mafia by the Tokyo police."

"The mafia?" Ryuukuu repeated. Organized crime had been greatly eradicated in Japan after the rise of All Might. Most villains operated

by themselves too. It was uncommon to find large traditional criminal organizations these days. Quirks made their way of doing things outdated and the heroes of the previous generations overpowered them easily.

However, they had been seeing a rise of villains banding together after the League of Villains infiltrated UA, Japan's top hero school with the best security. They even followed the students to their training camp! Crime rate spiked but it was only gradually seeing a decline again since All Might was still around and the gruesome death of the League installed fear in many people's hearts, villain or not. The media loved that story. They championed it and the mystery of who could be behind such a brutal act. It couldn't have been a hero group. Most people speculated that it had been the work of another group of villains.

The constant reminder of the murders still caused a lot of the villains to decide to lay low for the time being. They seemed afraid for their own safety too. Thus, while individual crimes had decreased, the heroes found themselves facing a different kind of headache as the villains gathered together and started working with each other.

They might not be strong individually but they had numbers, making it easy for them to gang up on single heroes. Not to mention, organized crimes were a lot harder to crack since it was like pulling out a root of potatoes, there would be other crimes intricately linked to it under the surface.

"Yes, Yamane had suspected links with a human trafficking ring that operated around Europe and Russia. The police were able to trace that his body was dumped there by members of Shie Hassaikai." There were a few photos on the monitor. A cargo ship and wet wallets and a broken watch.

Midoriya was shaking slightly and so were his classmates and senpai when the next picture came on.

There was a body. A body that looked like it had been electrocuted. The man's face was stuck in a twisted expression of pain and he was curling into himself. His flesh was swollen though, being in the water for too long that it was hard to make out what he looked like properly when he was still alive.

The other heroes winced slightly. Aizawa spared his students a glance but none of them asked to be excused.

“We conducted a thorough investigation of the maze under Shie Hassaikai’s base. Yamane was associated with them, probably exchanging intel as the yakuza are locals in this area. There was also this video clip showing Yamane running through one of the corridors.”

A video of a brown haired man with sickly pale skin and goat-like horns came up. He looked scared, like he was panicking and there was someone chasing him. The video clip turned fuzzy and black out in a few seconds.

“That’s all we have on it. It looked like the surveillance system had been destroyed by whoever was chasing him. We have not been able to recover the footage. However, we did manage to locate this from outside where Chisaki supposedly was holding Eri for his experiments,” Bubble Girl clicked on the laptop some more and the video changed. There was static and a black screen came up. More static. The image that came on was spotty and grainy. They could barely make out anything on the video.

“We can’t clean the feed up some more?” Fatgum asked.

“This is the best the tech team was able to recover. The black box had been severely fried.”

Then there was Eri. She looked even smaller in the video. Togata-senpai sat up straighter and his back was stiff. His expression was in that scary blank state of focus too. They missed their chance to save Eri again.

“Who are you?” Eri asked quietly as she cowered in the corner. She was facing the door but whoever the person there was, they weren’t at a good angle to be captured by the camera.

The screen shook and the scenery in the video seemed to spin and tumble. When it finally stopped, the angle looked like the security camera had been smacked to the ground. There was a large boot in half of the screen and a scared yelp from Eri that was cut short as the girl placed her hands over her mouth to stop herself from screaming.

The boot shifted and the person, probably an adult figure, was standing in front of the computer. The heroes could only see their dark pants and the bottom of a long black coat. Nothing distinguishable to tell who the person was. The person never said anything, they just stood in front of the computer and took a USB with them. Then the room was filled with a flash of lightning, bright pale blue lights that busted all the electronic equipment in the room. A

hand, probably a man's, reached for Eri. There were sparks of green electricity from the man's hand as he grabbed her roughly despite how scared she looked. Her body went limp and the man took her out of view like he was holding a stray cat by the back of its neck.

Midoriya grinded his teeth through it.

"The lab computers were destroyed from the outside, they didn't explode from within. He intentionally sabotaged all of it," Sir Nighteye said. "We're not sure what exactly the mysterious suspect took from the computer but it can be assumed that it is the experimental results Chisaki had gathered on Eri and the quirk erasing bullets."

"We questioned Chisaki's underlings and they said they located Yamane's body in the corridors, which alarmed them something was wrong. They then discovered Eri's disappearance and the state of the lab. It can be inferred that Chisaki was furious about the development and after that…your guesses are as good as ours."

Bubble Girl mentioned the paper transcripts in front of everyone. "At some point the unsub and Eri encountered lower ranking members of the yakuza. There are bullet halls on the walls and we have confirmed three dead in their path. They had been executed by having their necks snapped. The medical examiner said all three died instantly and we believe this was the work of a professional."

Midoriya found that to be horrifying but also concerning. Heroes were supposed to keep damages to a minimum but how many times had he attacked a villain without thinking too much about if his actions would permanently injure the criminal? When he fought Muscular in the forest, all he could think about was the need to protect Kouta and defeat the villain. Still, to hear that someone had deliberately taken on a profession consisting of ending people's lives…the young hero wasn't sure what to think about that.

A professional hitman took Eri. God, what was going to happen to her?

"A contracted killer?" Rock Lock murmured under his breath as he scrolled through the transcript. Midoriya's heart sank at his words. "Somebody else wanted a piece of Chisaki's business?"

"Perhaps," the representative from the Commission agreed. "But we can't confirm that until we have located the girl and this man."

“We haven’t seen more quirk erasing bullets circulating on the streets lately,” the police member said. That was somewhat of a relief, maybe whoever it was didn’t have the means to create the bullets yet, which meant that they most probably wouldn’t kill Eri just yet. “But this did come up in our search.”

Another video and this one looked like it was streaming live.

It was Chisaki.

Chisaki was in a hospital gown and he sat in the corner of a room, dazed and confused, staring at empty space and mumbling incoherent gibberish. There were bags under his eyes and his lips looked chapped. His hands were in special quirk restraints.

“You found him?” Fatgum stood up in a hurry, knocking over his chair. He was only starting to regain his weight but he still retained his towering height over the majority of the people in the room.

“Yes, a patrol unit picked him up around 1:00AM this morning in a dumpster. News of his arrest shall be made to the public this afternoon.” Nighteye nodded but his expression was still dark. “Eri was not with him and his mental capacity has been reverted to that of a child’s. While physically unharmed, he is not responding to any outside stimuli, seeming to be trapped inside his own head. From the state we found him in, the doctors concluded that he had been out of it for a few days at least. The strange thing is that someone emptied his personal accounts under an alias at the bank during that time.”

“Security from the bank confirmed Chisaki was the one who took out the funds, which should be completely impossible,” Bubble Girl finished for him. “We have alerts out for Chisaki but the tellers didn’t recognize him and their memory of the transaction is fuzzy.”

“Could it be connected to the person who took the girl?” Ryuukuu pondered out loud.

“That is what we are thinking, otherwise it’s too strange of a coincidence,” Nighteye said. “While some in the media may think that villains going against each other is a good thing, I wouldn’t be so optimistic. That is what they are willing and capable of doing to others, the civilians and us on this side of the law aren’t safe either.”

The rest of the meeting didn’t register itself inside Midoriya’s head. Eri was still missing and god knew what the people that took her had in plan for her. It made him sick just to imagine the possibilities.

He stared at the transcript in his hands. The villains were battling each other but it wasn't putting any of them at ease. The deaths were simply too clean and cold or brutal for any regular person to stomach.

Midoriya placed the documents down. He couldn't read this anymore.

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There were things that kept secrets from the public and regular heroes.

Aizawa moved to a different meeting room after the one regarding the yakuza raid was over. He was tired and in desperate need of a jug of the strongest black coffee ever known to man but he was stuck with the lukewarm watery stuff from the reception area of the police department.

"Hello Eraserhead," Detective Tsukauchi greeted him. He was the lead investigator for the League of Villains and although the League was dead, his work has not lessened.

Aizawa nodded at him.

There were others in the room of course. All Might, Gran Torino along with Principal Nezu were all present. Even Endeavor was here too, which was strange considering he didn't seem like the type to be invited for this kind of meeting. The current No.1 hero seemed to be apprehensive and nervous.

"Gentlemen, let's get started. I don't want to keep you all for too long." Detective Tsukauchi stood at the front of the room and he had a pile of paper in his hands. "As you all know, the League is no more but that is only the version of the report we provided to the media. There is actually a survivor."

He scanned the room, taking in the shift on everybody's expressions. "Toga Himiko. She is alive but just barely. Right now she is secretly being treated in a hospital that I cannot disclose and in a catatonic state. We are unable to extract any information from her but the doctors are doing their best to see if there would be any chance of her waking up."

"Then we still have no new leads. Why was I called here?" Endeavor questioned in a deep and displeased voice.

"We found a few other interesting things when the examiners did an

autopsy on the villains' bodies. One of the DNA came back a match to someone in our system, someone on the hero's side." Detective Tsukauchi showed them Dabi's picture. "This man here, his DNA matches yours, Endeavor. It shows that you are his father."

"That's impossible!" The flame hero slammed his fist on the table so hard that the cups jumped an inch off the surface, almost spilling. There were embers flaring off his skin.

Principal Nezu slid the documents closer to the man. "They confirmed it three times. It was a match and they ran another test with old hospital records to confirm that Dabi is Todoroki Touya."

Who was that? Aizawa wasn't sure but there was a hurt expression that flashed across Endeavor's face. Although it was quickly replaced by rage. "TOUYA IS DEAD! I LOOKED FOR HIM MYSELF AND FOUND HIS BURNT JAW BONE IN THE DAMN FOREST!"

Aizawa scanned through the files. Endeavor had three sons and his eldest died in a forest fire, at least that was what the report said. But now the medical and lab reports are saying the young man who attacked their training camp was Endeavor's dead son.

Endeavor wiped his face with his hand and his shoulders trembled a bit after he read that report. More like glared actually. He seemed to be ready to blow.

"Endeavor, do you need a minute?" All Might asked.

"No, I don't!" the No.2 hero growled as he turned to stare at Detective Tsukauchi. Desperate and still in shock. It must have felt like daggers stabbing between his ribs, cutting into his heart and lungs to heard that his child was still alive all this time, yet only to learn that he missed the chance to save him. The young man was dead. Gruesomely. Beyond repair. "I need to see his body later."

"Of course." The man nodded in sympathy and understanding. "Shigaraki Tomura's DNA match is also noted. He is the grandchild of All Might's old teacher."

All Might had gotten a warning beforehand. Aizawa wasn't particularly a crazy All Might fan but from the looks on the man's face, they probably shared a deep bond.

"All For One had been gathering pawns to use against us," Principal Nezu said. The existence of All For One had been shared with the

heroes who joined in on the fight against Nomus in Kamino. The villain had been acquiring influence and terrorizing people since the early stages of quirk's existence. "Shigaraki and Dabi, I believe he might be brainwashing or teaching them his evil and twisted ways in order to make them hate hero society."

"All Might, your teacher…" Aizawa didn't need to finish.

"She died bravely on the battlefield against All For One."

It was sinister indeed.

All For One was forcing them to fight their loved ones. Blood relatives and legacies. He was pitting them against each other.

Aizawa was included in this meeting because his students this year just seemed like they needed exorcists. The amount of villain encounters for *first years* was abnormal and alarming. Not to mention, if All For One was targeting All Might, then UA could also be the criminal mastermind's target.

"Our people have been looking for All For One. We don't think that he would stop whatever he was planning. This might set him back but we anticipated for him to make a comeback. Our informants managed to catch wind about the situation and they said the execution of the League was done by the mafia. Italian mafia."

"Which group is it?" Aizawa asked. Organized crime hadn't died out across the globe. There were notable groups in all countries. Criminal families. They had been rooted too deep in society for any lone hero to eradicate. Even though he hadn't left Japanese soil, Aizawa had received briefings about the more notorious groups periodically.

"They think it was Vongola."

Silence. Dead silence filled the room.

Vongola was a headache of mysteries by itself.

For any hero worth even half a grain of their salt across the world, they would eventually be introduced to the ultimate question of how Vongola stayed in power for so long at least once in their career. Numerous heroes and government agencies had tried to take them down but this organization was a giant, unwavering and mighty. If All For One ruled the underworld of Japan during its dark ages, then Vongola was, without a doubt, the emperor of the rest of the world's

criminal forces. It was not clear how they started but they had a long history tainted with blood and sins. Everywhere their name was known, it installed fear and respect.

Aizawa had no clue how they managed to remain in power since they mainly operated the traditional mafia way. No quirks. Just good old mafia shootouts like in the movies. They had such a tight hold on the criminals too. Vongola's orders were law in their dark world. Any upper ranked officials could even be considered criminal royalty.

Vongola was in its Ninth generation. Its ranks had not shrunk even when the age of chaos with all the blooming quirks came to be. They held their fort and expanded, taking over the vast majority of the darkness in this world. Although it wasn't at its most glorious era any longer, it was still a terrifying organization. It was uncanny and fascinating but also came with a lot of frustration for the heroes because *villains* were running wild and doing whatever they pleased.

Aizawa didn't believe in the villains' code of honour. No matter how much these mafia seemed to boast about it.

"Why did Vongola target the League? We have no idea. It might have something to do with All For One expanding his forces overseas. There are rumors of his influence spreading after the League made its debut."

"If it's Vongola, there is nothing much we can do." Gran Torino shook his head. "They don't leave evidence behind. Toga is extremely lucky to even be breathing right now."

"Exactly," the detective agreed. "Which is also why we are keeping her whereabouts confidential. They might come to finish the job…if we can, I'd like to avoid using a seventeen years old girl as bait to lure out the mafia. Villain or not, she is still a child and her crimes should be judged in a court of law instead of biting a bullet."

That much Aizawa could agree.

"If All For One and Vongola got into an all out war..." All Might didn't need to finish. The casualties would horrid if the strongest mafia family went head to head with All For One and his Nomu army.

The rest of the meeting was accompanied by the same gloomy tension. They simply knew too little about Vongola to even start an investigation. The Italian government might know more but it was hard to get them to share that information. Vongola had too much

influence over there. That family was the crownless kings and queens in Europe.

It was late at night, close to 11:00 PM when Aizawa finally got back to campus. He checked up on his students as he passed by the 1-A dorm. His kids were in their usual state of chaos. A few of them cooked and ate while the others did homework in the lounge, complaining loudly about hard assignments or freaking out over a test result. Bakugou wasn't there but that was normal. There was a laptop hooked up to the TV and there was a model on the screen. It looked like she was streaming from her bedroom, talking about makeup and trying it on for the audience. Blonde hair and red eyes, she looked like a real life doll.

Mineta was getting too close to the screen for everybody else's comfort and the boy got taped up by Sero. Aizawa would need to have another talk with Mineta tomorrow. It was fine to have raging teenage hormones or attraction to others but Mineta was…not expressing it appropriately.

For some reason, the model looked oddly familiar but Aizawa shook his head. He might have seen her ads around the city before. Although he wasn't interested in celebrities, it was hard to ignore all the billboards with the model's face on it. She might even rival top 50 heroes in popularity.

Still, why did he felt like he knew those fierce scarlet eyes from somewhere?

Sleep deprivation must really be getting to him.

More importantly, it was time to climb into his sleeping bag.

He would take a shower in the morning…if he remembered he needed one.

Chapter End Notes

I just really needed to get Mukuro some screen time XD

Also, I'm actually confused...what do you guys think my writing style is? I feel like I'm changing the tone in every chap but I'm also doing multi POV so...hmm, not sure?

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Money was an evil motivator.

Katsuki knew shit was coming his way like a hurricane made of knives when he saw the email from the baby illusionist. Mammon got Victoire a new gig. A new gig that involved Victoire showing up at UA.

At damn fucking bloddy hell UA.

The pay was handsome of course and Victoire only had to show up for a brief period of time. Katsuki wasn't sure what the rat of a principal was thinking but this looked like a ridiculous amount of money to spend on a model for her to appear. Not that Victoire wasn't expensive. She was *quality* and Mammon had always made her in the image of a modern princess. Expensive brands, high end galas, quality stuff. Victoire certainly wasn't cheap.

The blond checked the actual job description plus the plan for it and then he understood. This was a recruiting campaign as much as it was a morale boost for the current students. UA might be famous and the best hero school in the country but after the villain attacks, there was still some scrutiny and doubt against it. Principal Nezu probably wanted to use this as a way to show everyone that UA was still the best.

"I swear to god, your greed is going to kill you one day!" Katsuki hissed into his phone. It had long disconnected and Mammon wasn't picking up his calls anymore so that meant he had to suck it up and deal with it.

As a result, he was in an extra foul mood for school the next few days. Even Kirishima got the memo to leave him alone for the time being. Katsuki tapped his fingers along the edge of the table during lunch time. The place was packed and busy as usual but Katsuki really wanted some of that spicy fried rice Lunch Rush makes so he was in line for it. Kirishima saved him a spot and Katsuki realized the majority of their class had taken up a long table in the lunchroom.

His classmates were chatting about the usual stupid stuff. Cosmetics, homework, exams, new recipes and video games, along with the normal hero news. Katsuki ate in silence,

“Mina, isn’t that the lip gloss Victoire used in her instagram a few days ago?”

The girls were sitting close together today.

“Yep! I just couldn’t resist! This one is soooo cute!” The pink haired girl raised the lip gloss up for everybody to see better. It was like a regular lipstick but once the small black cap was taken off, they could all see a clear gel-like lip gloss with small flowers and light glitter embedded inside.

“It is so pretty.”

“And this one isn’t that expensive either.”

“I put in my order late but I’m getting the rose one, they sold out so quickly!”

The clamouring seemed to attract the other extras around the room. Katsuki saw a few girls from class B gathered closer. There was the lizard girl who could section herself off into different pieces, Mushroom Grower, American Horns, and the rest that he didn’t particularly remember, maybe except for the orange hair ponytail who always dragged the Copy Cat away.

“The lavender one smells nice,” the one with the orange ponytail said.

Her classmate with green thorns for hair moved in closer. “I got the rose one too. That one is the prettiest and it looked so good when Victoire used it.”

“That one did look the best on her.”

“I couldn’t decide which one I wanted.” Hagakure waved her hands around. “All of them in this collection look so good.”

“Right?” Uraraka beamed and she was excited as well. She had placed an order along with Jirou and Tsuyu to get a cheaper deal and their package should come soon. “She really has style.”

Katsuki decided he heard enough. Hearing the girls praise him was stroking his ego and it did make him feel a little better about the

whole modeling thing that he would have to do *in school* a few days later. He could do this, just needed a little help from one misty guardian that was associated with Tsunayoshi. Not the pineapple freak though. He was a wild card and Katsuki didn't have the confidence to control fully.

His classmates, wait, scratch that. His whole scholl was going to be in a frenzy once the news got out.

And the news came *way* faster than Katsuki expected. The first class for the afternoon was Aizawa's and Principal Nezu popped out of his scarf with an enthusiastic wave.

"Good afternoon everyone!" He greeted them in his squeaky little voice. "I have some exciting news to share with you all."

He jumped onto the teacher's stand and placed his paws behind his back, smiling almost too brightly that made everyone's nerves a little tingly. Their principal was sometimes a little spontaneous with his mind games.

"The district's education board and I have decided to allow a class of middle schoolers to come tour UA for a day. They will be allowed to see how classes are taught within all the departments, which includes the hero course's too!" he announced cheerfully. "Of course, there would be a news crew here as well but you do not need to respond to their questions if you aren't comfortable."

Iida's hand went up immediately. "Principal Nezu, not to be rude but isn't that dangerous?"

They were in a dorm system because of villains. Everybody had the same question in their heads too. Even with the League of Villains out of the picture, it sounded dangerous and bold to arrange for such an event.

"Don't worry, we have only selected one class of lucky children and all of them have been thoroughly background checked," the rat reassured them with a calm voice. "The reporters are certified by the Commission and they have all passed their security clearance as well. We will keep them in certain parts of the school too. Your dorms would be off limits to all visitors as well." He paused for a moment, scanning them with his beady little eyes that held a gentle warmth. "I know after the villain attacks a portion of society has been apprehensive of considering a career in heroics. The Commission and I believe that this will help ease the nervousness. This will also be a

great way for us to connect with the public as well as for you all to inspire new heroes."

The class erupted into overlapping chatter. Some anxious about being on TV while others were concerned about having so many juniors coming in and watching them in class. Training was fun but also grueling. They would be dirty and sweaty, not exactly the kind of look that goes well on camera.

"Also, as a bonus for everybody, we have invited a special guest to join the party—Miss Victoire C Quattro."

That got the whole class to turn into a circus.

"No way!" Kaminari shouted as his whole body leaned forward.

Mineta looked like he was about to faint. "You can't be serious!"

"We get to see *Victoire* in person?"

The rest of the class was also excited. Even the more quiet ones all had their eyes lit up. It wasn't everyday they get to meet an international model!

Their principal nodded while Aizawa-sensei looked more like he wanted to be anywhere but here. "They will be coming to visit our school the day next Tuesday, please be courteous and kind to our guests."

Principal Nezu left the classroom but the students couldn't calm down yet.

"Victoire is going to be here…" Mineta was drooling already, probably fantasizing about some not so appropriate things.

"I wonder if she's as hot in real life as she is in the pictures," Sato said.

Mina giggled. "I'm sure she's just as wonderful. I'd totally be gay for her too."

The rest of the class laughed but one stern look from Aizawa made everybody straighten up. The pro hero sighed while scratching his head. Katsuki could practically hear what the man was thinking since everybody knew how much Aizawa-sensei distaste the media.

To be honest, Katsuki wasn't too excited about this either.

He really hoped they could get through this smoothly but there was just one small problem—The middle school that got selected was Namimori Middle.

Tsunayoshi's class.

This was just a recipe for disaster, wasn't it?

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Class 1-A decided they needed a collective shopping trip to the mall. They had been in the dorms mostly and although online shopping or the convenience store just outside of UA could provide their daily needs, they were itching for some physical shopping. Not to mention, they were going to meet a celebrity! Everybody wanted to make sure they looked nice and had a good haircut for the camera.

It took a lot of begging for their teachers to be willing to grant them permission to leave campus in large groups. Normally Aizawa-sensei wouldn't have let them but with the League gone, they have lowered their wariness slightly.

However, the pro hero would still be accompanying them to the mall, where there would also be other heroes patrolling. Apparently there was a murder in the district and they haven't caught the killer yet. Strange enough, the victim was one known to police. He was a villain that liked to do break ins and robberies and they suspected he might have gotten into an altercation with another villain.

The news said his flesh was skinned off like what that torture method described in ancient China. Where they cut a person's flesh off slice by slice a thousand times before finally killing them.

Bakugou got dragged along since it was a "class outing". The blond had been very vocal in voicing his dislike for crowds but he still let Mina and Kaminari tug him along.

It was a fun event. Everybody split off into smaller groups and wandered into the different shops. Their teacher had a coffee in hand and was moving around the mall, checking up on the group while greeting fellow heroes if they knew each other from previous work already.

The mall they were at wasn't big so if they shouted, their classmates a few shops down would be able to hear them.

Kirishima's group ended in a clothing shop that sold sweaters. They had special ugly Christmas sweaters and the cool manly kinds that Kirishima loved. Kaminari found one with a lightning bolt on it too.

"This one would look good on you, Bakugou." Sero held up a brown one with the comical effect of explosions on it.

"It's ugly."

"Oh come on, it's so you! It also comes in yellow."

"Those colours don't do him justice," someone else interjected and a black sweater landed on Bakugou's head. "Black suits him the best."

It was a teen around their age standing behind Bakugou. He had golden hair and his bangs covered his eyes but even if they could only see half of his face, they could all tell he was good looking. He was about the same height as Bakugou and he wore black cargo pants with suspenders and a long sleeve dark blue shirt that had some kind of logo over his left chest. There was also a silver tiara on his head and he wore ankle length boots.

"Ushishi, long time no see." The stranger had an odd laugh and a wide grin. He greeted Bakugou with a kind of relaxed familiarity as he lifted the other blond boy up and gave him a small twirl. The black sweater dropped to the ground mid spin.

"Bel," Bakugou warned in an octave that was higher than his normal voice should sound like. "Put me the fuck down before I punch you in the lips."

The teen, Bel, let go and Bakugou picked up the sweater from the ground. He didn't seem particularly irritated by the physical touches, which was strange considering this was Bakugou, who had been snappier than usual lately.

"Who is this?" Kirishima asked.

"This is Bel, he's a friend." Bakugou threw the black sweater at Bel. "What are you doing here?"

"Work."

Bel might have some foreign blood in him. His Japanese had this accent to it but the UA kids couldn't tell where it was from.

“Part time job?” Kaminari knew other high schools allowed students to take part time work but UA’s dorm system didn’t allow for such a thing. Not unless there were some serious circumstances that called for an exception. Online jobs didn’t count though, if they could take work remotely then the school didn’t penalize them.

“Full time,” Bel answered and there was a regal grace to him even if he wasn’t dressed the part.

“Wow, you’re working already? What about school?”

Mina placed a hand on Kaminari’s shoulder and the boy realized a bit late that he was being rude. Not everybody would choose to continue with highschool or higher education in Japan.

“I’m sorry, you don’t have to answer that if you don’t want to,” he apologized.

Thankfully Bel didn’t take offense, he placed his hands behind his head and there was pride in his tone. “I don’t need to go to peasant schools cause I’m a prince.”

Bakugou rolled his eyes besides Bel.

“Prince?” Mina repeated suspiciously. “Were you the one who sent Bakugou the blue roses?”

“Don’t you think they make wonderful decorations? Fitting for a Royal’s taste!” The way Bel carried himself had a childish enthusiasm and his wide grin never dropped.

Kirishima saw Mina’s eyes lit up. She had told them about the flowers Bakugou got. The tag said it was from Prince.

Oh My God.

Could it be?

Were they looking at Bakugou’s mystery boyfriend right now?

Kirishima could see the same questions on Sero and Kaminari’s faces.

Bakugou knocked Bel’s chest lightly, pushing him back from the rest of them. “Don’t mind him, he’s a little weird in the head. Don’t you have work to get back to, Bel?”

“Already done. I’m sure the clients would *remember* this delivery for

ages." The answer was followed by his signature laugh and it was somehow a little…unsettling? Kirishima shook that thought out of his head. This was Bakugou's possible boyfriend, maybe he was an acquired taste just like Bakugou.

"And what are you doing at the mall?" Bakugou looked like he really wanted to get Bel to leave. Suspicious.

"Getting food."

"Oh, are you having lunch? Then why don't you join us?" Mina offered. "Shouji said there's this really nice restaurant around the corner and he has coupons for it."

Bakugou frowned. "I don't think—"

"Sure," Bel agreed easily as he hooked an arm around Bakugou's shoulders. "I'm curious about you UA kids too. I'm sure that Boss wouldn't mind if I take my time."

That settled things. Despite Bakugou's protest, they took their new friend to meet up with the rest of the class.

"Who's that?" Todoroki questioned when he saw Kirishima's group showing up at the restaurant. Even if there were no active villain threats, they were still cautious of unfamiliar faces. Midoriya sat up a bit taller and the other classmates all turned their heads around.

Sero nudged Bakugou playfully with a sly smile. "Are you going to introduce him?"

"This is Bel," Bakugou said as he shoved Sero away lightly. "He's a long time friend and nuisance."

And Bakugou was making jokes now. Kirishima almost had tears in his eyes. It was hard to see their class grenade so at ease around someone. The red head could also see Mina ticking off another box of "suspected Bakugou's boyfriend confirmation".

"Nice to meet you." Todoroki nodded. He shifted over to create more space for them.

"You're not a UA student are you?" Uraraka asked, a little curious as she must have noticed how the rest of the Bakusquad was trying hard to not grin like idiots.

“Nope. The prince doesn’t do school,” Bel said easily as he slid into the seat beside Bakugou, who passed him the menu.

“Prince?”

“He’s weird in the head, don’t mind him if he says weird stuff.” Bakugou waved dismissively. Bel ordered food as the waiter came by. The only thing was, he didn’t order for one. He ordered for both himself *and* Bakugou.

“We can try more foods this way!”

“You just need somebody to finish the things you don’t like.”

It was kind of fun to watch them interact. Bel was an energetic one too but not in an aggressive sort of way. In fact, he kind of had a slothful nature. There always seemed to be this glee behind his voice (his laughter didn’t get less unsettling though). He did have a few more strange quirks personality wise. Bel liked to refer to himself as “prince” and he looked like he was convinced he really was royalty too.

Bakugou drew small circles beside his temple with his index finger, signaling that his friend was crazy…which probably was the truth. Bel was dramatic and might be slightly out of touch with reality but he was fun to talk to.

Jirou commented quietly that anybody who could make Bakugou relax in their presence was already a miracle worker. Bakugou denied it, complaining about how he had to clean up the mess left by Bel’s spontaneous pranking disasters.

All while he shared the food that Bel ordered for them. He didn’t even notice when Bel dropped a broccoli from his own plate into Bakugou’s. Or maybe he did, just didn’t care. Bakugou also shoved food into Bel’s mouth whenever the older blond (he was in fact older than them by a year) would want to dive into stories of their past.

While it was hard to tell which parts of Bel’s stories were fictional fantasies and which were real (he was really convinced of his royal background but couldn’t provide concrete details about his home country or anything else along those lines), it was absolutely hilarious to see Bakugou’s domesticated side.

“So how did you two know each other?” Yaoyorozu asked with a curious smile.

“Katsuki knew my boss and we got to know each other from there.”

It was a really generic answer but it didn’t look like Bel wanted to go deeper so they didn’t pry. He didn’t talk about work either. Said it had to do with confidentiality issues.

They did, however, find out about Bel’s quirk. He could produce thin and razor sharp wires from his fingers. It was a cool quirk but as he said, “heroics just wasn’t for *it*” for him. Too many rules and regulations apparently.

Kirishima wouldn’t say that Bel was really assertive but he was certainly eccentric and confident. He was probably smart too because Bakugou didn’t say anything when he claimed to be a genius and Bel apparently spoke seven languages! That was impressive! He was good looking too and Kirishima had learned that Bakugou was a sucker for good looks through his occasional comments on the actors in TV shows. His standards were *really* high though.

Belphegor certainly had the looks.

A little crazy might be exactly what it took to date Bakugou too. That the world was his playground attitude made him a chill guy and Kirshima thought that was pretty cool.

Lunch went by quickly and they all had to return to school. Aizawa-sensei would be waiting for them at the entrance of the mall. Bakugou and Bel lagged behind the group, Kirishima and Midoriya were probably the closest to them but since they were helping Iida make sure no one got lost. Midoriya had been quieter than usual, maybe Kirishima should ask if there was something bothering him later.

Glancing back, the red head saw Bakugou and Bel saying goodbye. Bel was playing with a dagger, it was silver and pretty but also real sharp. He threw it up and caught it easily, repeating the action carelessly as he talked to Bakugou. It was hard to make out what they were saying but Kirishima heard the last portion clear as day.

“See you soon, Princess.”

Midoriya must have heard it too because he froze in his steps.

Oh, Bel was totally Bakugou’s boyfriend for sure. Kirishima was going to tell his friends about the nickname and they were going to tease Bakugou with it!

But despite all that teasing he had planned, Kirishima was sure that Bakugou made one spectacular princess.

2

The day that everybody was waiting for was finally here!

Katsuki could feel the excitement in the air even before he set foot out of his door.

“Victoire is going to be here!” Mineta was practically bouncing the night before but everyone else ignored him. Iida looked at him suspiciously and gathered a few boys from class to let them know to watch Mineta closely tomorrow.

Katsuki wasn’t surprised to find a girl in his bedroom early in the morning.

The girl was slender and she wore a standard middle schooler uniform and her right eye was covered by an eyepatch with a skull pattern. Her hair was a shade of dark blue and done in the same pineapple-shape as Mukuro’s.

Her name was Chrome, Tsunayoshi’s other mist guardian. To be exact, she was one of Mukuro’s vessels, probably his favorite one too. She had potential and Mukuro taught her how to use illusions.

“Good morning,” she said quietly. Chrome wasn’t a big people’s person. “Boss asked me to come help you today…I’ll do my best.”

“Thanks. You just need to make another copy of me for the day and you can make the copy tell my teachers I’m not feeling well enough for training. They will let me sit out.” Katsuki hadn’t talked to Chrome much. She didn’t go to Namimori Middle before since Mukuro still despised the mafia. Not that Hibari couldn’t fix this small issue and let her join in today.

Katsuki owned Hibari a fight though.

Chrome nodded and another copy of Katsuki, fully dressed in his UA uniform appeared. Katsuki inspected it and it was alright. Not Mammon or Mukuro level trickery but it would do. He got dressed and put on makeup, turning into Victoire easily. He added hair extensions but he was also wearing the girl version of UA’s uniform, complete with a bow instead of a tie.

Chrome stared at him for a bit and Katsuki raised a questioning brow.

“Mukuro-sama said you are really good at disguises even without illusions,” she explained softly. “You look very pretty, Bakugou-san.”

“You’re not that bad looking yourself,” Katsuki said. She was helping him today so he could be nicer to her. “Here, try this. It’s brand new.”

He handed her one of the lipsticks off his collection.

“I can’t accept…” she started but Katsuki didn’t take it back.

“Just try.”

Chrome gave him a shy smile but she let Katsuki place it on for her. It was a pale pink that matched her skin tone well. Katsuki was starting to get why Lussuria liked to do his makeup so much.

“Are you ready for the day?” he asked and she nodded.

They sneaked off campus with the help of Chrome’s illusions and Katsuki’s knowledge of where all the surveillance was. The front of UA was crowded with reporters and fans who caught wind of the story.

Victoire arrived in a private car (arranged by Mammon) while Namimori Middle’s students came on the bus. Chrome was mixed with the group.

“Ahhhhh! Victoire! We love you!” The fans were hollering from behind the security line and Katsuki smiled at them, earning another wave of crazy cheers and swooning. This was the best part of being Victoire. Everybody’s eyes were on him. Pictures and autographs, the amount of adoration and positive attention made all the preening worth the while.

The students of Namimori Middle also looked excited.

“Oh my god! It really is her!”

“I can’t believe we actually get to meet her in person.”

“She’s hotter than in the pictures.”

“Can we get an autograph from her afterwards?”

“I think she might be a little bulkier than when she’s on camera?”

The person who commented last got elbowed in the stomach by his classmate. Victoire certainly wasn't like the standard model. Katsuki had been rejected for a few shows and brands because he was growing "too big". It couldn't be helped. The male physiology was different from the female's and he was training hard too. To use his quirk effectively, he needed strong upper body muscles and keeping up with Varia standards meant he had to make sure his body is sculpted like an athlete's.

Katsuki paid those comments no mind. He could kick ass in heels, no one gets to tell him that he wasn't pretty enough and if they don't want him, it was their loss.

His parents might have other opinions but fuck them.

The camera crew responsible for today's filming surrounded him as soon as the rest of the crazy crowd was blocked outside of the gates. The lead reporter was young, a woman dressed sharply. Katsuki thought that she looked familiar. She might have been wandering around school a few times, like during the sports festival.

"Victoire, how are you feeling about returning to the spotlight?" she asked as Katsuki was passed a microphone.

"I'm delighted to be here," Katsuki answered. It was practiced and rehearsed. The perfect ladylike smile that Mammon forced him to learn. He hated it at first but it worked wonders and then…well, Katsuki learned that he really liked tricking people. He didn't even have to lie! All he had to do was smile.

"Some fans are speculating that you will venture out on a new avenue? Are you considering returning to model work anytime soon or will you consider a career change in other positions in the industry?"

"Oh I'm not really sure about a career change right now. I do still love modeling and special thanks to everyone that has supported me so far." Katsuki was pretty sure the next questions would pertain to his love life and he didn't want to deal with that. Most people just think he was dating a rich Italian guy, only those higher up in society's ladder and those in the mafia knew who Xanxus really was. He would like to keep it that way. "But today's not about me. It's about this magnificent school that continues to nurture heroes for our society's future! I can't wait to meet all our future heroes! The Sports Festival really got me fired up too!"

He got fucking first place. Of course he was fired up.

Principal Nezu welcomed them and Snipe was the one accompanying the rat today. The arrival of a pro hero made the students even more excited. They were almost overwhelmed. It was every kid's dream to be a hero and now they were standing inside the campus of the greatest hero school in Japan. Almost everyone was grateful for it.

Except for Tsunayoshi's group.

Katsuki's eyes met the brown haired teen's and he gave her a meek smile. Chrome was beside him and so was this red haired boy with a lot of bandages on his face. He hadn't been too excited about coming to UA since well, he was technically associated with the mafia. Yamamoto was still his usual carefree smile and he waved at Katsuki along with the rest of the students. Gokudera on the other hand had more scowls than anything else.

They were here for a reason.

Sawada Tsunayoshi was going to be crowned as Decimo. The inheritance (basically a coronation if Katsuki was being honest) ceremony would take place in Japan in a few days. Mafia families and other important figures of the underworld would be coming to Japan to attend this ceremony. Allied families had been attacked and they received intel that someone was trying to sabotage the ceremony, which was why Reborn pulled some strings to get Namimori selected for this event.

A school for heroes was less likely to be a target for the mafia. Too flashy. No one would want that.

Unless the one plotting their doom was All For One of course. But even the villain couldn't do much on the hero's main turf. He was already down a few pawns, it wouldn't be wise to attack where All Might was stationed.

Everything about it sounded fishy as hell.

Katsuki didn't poke the hornet's nest though, because there were microphones and surveillance everywhere in this school, except for inside the bathrooms and the dorms. If they wanted to talk, they would have to do it afterwards. Also, Katsuki wasn't particularly inclined to speak with Vongola Ninth. Apparently Xanxus's old man was in Japan too and he knew who katsuki was.

Didn't sound like fun. He would rather not have to meet the head of the underground world without his shitty tempered boyfriend.

"I AM HERE!"

All Might's thundering voice boomed from above and he landed in the courtyard. He was dressed in his hero uniform and he flashed his hearty smile at the cameras.

"All Might!"

The kids and reporters went crazy for him, temporarily forgetting Katsuki. A few of the boys shoved past the red haired kid besides Tsunayoshi and he nearly tripped over. Katsuki pulled him so he didn't land flat on his face.

"T-Thank you," he said in a small voice while blushing.

"Don't mention it." Katsuki smiled back. For some reason, this kid gave off the same air as Tsunayoshi, maybe even worse than middle school Midoriya in terms of that gloomy air around him too. He felt like the type that would get constantly picked on.

Katsuki went ahead but as he glanced back, he saw Tsunayoshi whisper something to the redhead and the boy's expression changed slightly. A mix of disbelief and…something darker that Katsuki couldn't quite catch.

Maybe this guy wasn't a civilian afterall? He'd ask Tsunayoshi later.

"You must be Vicotire! Nice to meet you, young lady." All Might stood in front of her.

"The pleasure's all mine." Katsuki shook his hand.

The heroes' gazes didn't linger on her too much. Although Nezu was staring at her for a bit too long. It was discreet but Katsuki was trained to be sensitive to prying eyes and he wouldn't underestimate the rat in terms of intelligence.

Katsuki smiled at the principal. When in doubt, just smile. Dazzle them and they would fuck off.

It worked wonders everytime. Even his mother wouldn't be able to recognize him considering he scowled most of the time when he was in his guy clothing.

They went on a tour around the school. They got to see a few of the city like training fields, the general department, support department, and other areas of the school. Everywhere they went, there were curious stares and blushed looks. Lunch was a zoo though. Katsuki felt like he was the animal behind the glass with all the people staring at him. The reporter was busy filming and asking the students questions, which was a relief.

“Victoire, can we please get your autograph?” someone from the crowd of students shouted. Katsuki agreed and a long line formed in front of his table. UA students and Namimori students all lined up and Katsuki signed on notebooks, handkerchiefs, keychains, and a lot of other random stuff.

Everything was fine until he saw the marriage application placed in front of him.

“Victoire, I really love you!”

The short boy with balls for hair shouted so loudly that everyone was turning their attention towards them. Mineta looked like he brushed up really properly and he even put on some cologne.

Disgusting.

Still, Katsuki kept his grin on.

“I’m flatter but my heart belongs to someone else.” He pushed the paper back towards Mineta, who looked like he was about to pounce onto him if he could. Again, disgusting. “I love him dearly so I would have to decline your offer.”

A few of the girls gushed and their male counterparts looked crushed.

“Mineta!” Iida came forward and he gave Katsuki a full 90 degree bow. “My apologies on behalf of my classmate. It was rude and improper of him to be making such bold gestures in public.”

He shoved the shorter boy back, who was taken away by Ojirou and Jirou.

“It’s alright.” Victoire couldn’t get mad at people. At least not at a bunch of UA students in front of a camera.

“It’s the mysterious love interest again!” The reporter squeezed in and slid into the spot next to Katsuki. “You have been dating for a while

now and your fans, including myself, are all dying to know more about this mystery man or boy! Please! We have to know!"

Foreigners tended to appear older than their actual age. Katsuki and Xanxus were also careful because of Xanxus's profession to avoid letting the paparazzi catch a clear photo of Xanxus. Without proper confirmation, most people outside of the mafia circle didn't knew exactly who he was.

There were whispers of speculations going on in the background. Someone even asked out loud if the love interest was a hero.

"He's not a hero," Katsuki said softly and the smile on his face was genuine this time. "He's intelligent and highly capable, someone of very few nice words but still charismatic. But he's not in the show business and I'd like to protect him from the unwanted spotlight. He could be a little camera shy and he's not much of a fan of crowds."

"Surely you can give us a little more?" the reporter pressed. Couldn't blame her, that was the nature of her job. "He sounds like the perfect guy!"

Katsuki shook his head. "He's far from perfect but I don't love him any less. I know people think he could be a little temperamental but he is a proper gentleman at heart."

Technically not a lie. Xanxus would never force himself on Katsuki if the blond *really* didn't want it. He'd find it troublesome and annoying but the man would keep his cock in his pants.

Was this Katsuki ignoring all the mutual yelling and cursing and a hell lot of nails and scratches with teeth? Maybe even a few slaps or punches if things got really bad? Yep. Totally.

The looks onTsunayoshi's group's faces was hilarious. Gokudera looked like he ate a rat sized fly and Tsunayoshi was choking himself to not scream. Yamamoto coughed and looked away while Chrome kept a poker face. The red haired boy beside them frowned slightly while he eyed the group with this mixed look of all sorts of emotions, he probably knew who Xanxus was then. Dang it, another mafia kid.

Lunch time was almost over and in the afternoon, they were invited to check out the hero course's training session.

His classmates looked like they wanted to come closer but one glance from Aizawa sent them back to focus on their class with Ectoplasm.

Katsuki saw the illusion copy of himself with a deep scowl sitting at the sidelines.

Chrome was doing a pretty good job.

“Victoire, we are big fans!” Mina and Tsuyu came forward. Tsuyu asked if she could get more than one autograph for her siblings and Katsuki agreed happily.

It was a bit weird to see his classmates adoring him though. He talked to them about normal things, congratulating them on getting their temporary license and acting impressed or surprised with their progress. Class B was having joint training with Class A today and it was weird to see Copycat come up and ask for an autograph without his usual taunting attitude.

Mammon would be proud. Victoire was irresistible.

“UA really is the best,” he said, knowing this was what Nezu wanted. A good comment from a popular and well loved model. “It makes me feel safe to know there are so many people working so hard to protect our daily lives.”

“Oh, we’re not at that level yet…” Kirishima said sheepishly while scratching his head but everyone could tell he enjoyed the compliment like the rest of the students.

Class A and Class B put on a great show for the camera. They were young aspiring heroes and they were skilled too. While still lacking in a lot of areas, it was obvious they would shine brightly on the stage of heroics in the future. Nezu was putting them out there to showcase the school and its students’ capabilities, which was something the public needed after all the news about villains and unrest this year.

Katsuki hung back and let the classes have the spotlight.

“Isn’t that Bakugou? The one that got kidnapped with No-Good Tsuna?” one of the kids said and Tsunayoshi stiffened a bit uncomfortably. The copy of Katsuki was watching from the sidelines, while dressed in his gm clothing.

“Looks like he’s sitting the class out,” his friend observed. “He’s kind of scary isn’t he? Oh, and I think he was also involved in another villain incident last year. It was on the news.”

“He’s like a villain magnet then.”

“Can’t blame them, he looks like a villain. That’s a scary one.”

They shoved past Tsunayoshi. One of them rubbed his shoulder and hissed lightly under his breath, “Don’t stand around like a stupid pole, No-Good Tsuna.”

“Bakugou-kun isn’t a villain,” Tsunayoshi mumbled quietly but his eyes were casted down. Kid still couldn’t find his spine most of the time and they wanted him to take on the mantle for Decimo now? Katsuki thought that was probably the stupidest thing Vongola could do.

…Maybe he could persuade Xanxus into letting Tsunayoshi call him “Zio” and take over the family from the shadows. That would certainly piss off Reborn and CEDEF really badly but if they could get it done and announced before the hitman and the external advisors notice…hmm, things might be interesting. Cause if Decimo himself admitted that Xanxus was his uncle, that would be a signal of respect.

It actually might not even be that hard. Vongola Nono was a good boss but clueless father and Tsunayoshi’s dad was basically a ghost, never coming home once for over half a dozen years and basically left his wife to raise their son on her own. Tsunayoshi and Xanxus both had daddy issues (which Katsuki knew was ironic since his own relationship with his parents wasn’t ideal either). They might be able to toast to roasting shitty dads? The images filling his head should probably stay with him to the grave. Reborn was going to point a gun to his head if he knew and make him face his mommy issues.

Katsuki didn’t have a mommy issue. He had a plan and he would say he was dealing with his familial problems rather effectively.

During the time that he spaced out, Tsunayoshi had been pushed to the quiet corner by the two larger boys and the rest of the group’s attention was focused on the hero training. Katsuki moved closer and the two middle schoolers immediately looked panicking.

“Oh my, is your friend not feeling well?” He covered his mouth with a hand and faked surprise. “There are medical robots waiting on the side, why don’t we let them take a look at him?”

The taller one let out a sigh of relief before nodding profusely as he backed away from Tsunayoshi. “Yeah. Y-Yes, we should!”

He was stuttering and a mess but Katsuki smiled at him, causing the boy to get flustered. Too easy. These boys were simply too easy.

“How kind of you to stay and look after your friend, but I think your teachers will be worried if she couldn’t find you. Why don’t you two let her know?”

They nodded and went off just as the medical robots arrived. Katsuki smiled at Tsunayoshi and the brown haired boy gulped because he had been around Katsuki enough to know which smiles were the dangerous ones.

They were all pretty. Some were exclusively for Xanxus only and the others were for the cameras and stupid shitheads. The rest though… *those* meant everybody better run as fast as they could away from him.

“You’re embarrassing your Zio,” Katsuki said quietly while walking past Tsunayoshi.

He joined the guests’ group and clapped when Tokoyami pulled off a new move to skillfully dodge the obstacles. At one point, Todoroki came up to her and he said something that almost made Katsuki’s heart stop.

“Don’t you guys think Victoire really looked like Bakugou?”

Fucking soba idiot. He really needed to keep his mouth shut. Seriously, he was so slow on social cues most of the time but why the fucking hell was his observation skills activated in weird places?

“HUH?” Chrome’s misty version of Katsuki stalked over, a deep twisted sneer clouding his features. “We look nothing alike, you half and half moron.”

This was probably more Gokudera than Katsuki but whatever. It was close enough. Chrome was doing her best.

The heterochromatic teen stared at them some more, looking indecisive. “What do you think, Midoriya?”

The green haired teen looked up, startled by the sudden call of his name. His large green eyes landed on Katsuki and his copy, which wasn’t good. Katsuki knew the kid had some scarily creepy observational skills.

“I don’t think we look alike? Maybe it’s the same colour theme that made you think so?” Katsuki suggested in an extra gentle voice and he forced his face to relax. He was so glad he chose to put on hair extensions today, long hair and short hair sometimes made all the

difference.

Todoroki finally nodded. “Maybe? I guess so.”

He ran back towards Midoriya and they would be the next group going on.

The visitors were told to head to their next destination at the same time and Katsuki waved goodbye at them.

“It was so nice to meet you, Victoire!”

“You’re just as pretty in real life!”

“Just as nice as people say too!”

“Our uniform looks super great on you!”

The enthusiastic farewells of the hero kids made him feel a surge of embarrassment. He really wanted this day to be over. They had two hours left and so far, no villain attacks or mafia bullshit. This was good. He hoped it stayed that way.

It wasn’t until they were ready to wrap the day up that he got a text on his phone.

From Tsuna:

Does that mean I have to call you Zia? Or is it still Zio?

Katsuki cracked a grin, this was unexpected but he liked the bastard’s cheeky side. Okay, maybe this little shit would last longer than his boyfriend expected.

He could work with that.

3

Sawada Tsunayoshi’s inheritance ceremony was today. They had decided on a smaller event, only the heads of associated families were invited and they would do it in Japan. Vongola Ninth and his guardians have already all flown in from Italy and that red haired kid Katsuki saw with Tsunayoshi was the boss to a small mafia family. The Simons. Never heard of them before but apparently they were on good terms with Vongola Primo all the way back in time so they got an invitation as well.

Varia was to attend too.

Katsuki wanted to smack whoever drew up that invitation list. He knew it was to show that Varia and Vongola had good relations, the strongest elite squad was what made people feared Vongola and it would be stupid to disband such a great army.

Still, who the fuck thought inviting Xanxus to the inheritance ceremony when he wasn't the one becoming Decimo was a good idea?

He had to fake some paperwork and signed himself out of campus under the name of family emergencies for the weekend. And in reality, it *was* a family emergency. Serious enough of a threat to warrant Mammon's help without needing to pay them too.

Katsuki, in a white dress that came down to his knees, walked into the penthouse at the top of the hotel and saw all of Varia's higher officers there. All of them were dressed in their perm black suits, looking sharp and dangerous. Squalo was fixing his tie in front of the mirror and the rest of the squad all looked a bit on edge.

Levi came out from one of the rooms with a little girl behind him. She looked different from when Katsuki first saw her. Her hair was tied back with a maroon ribbon and she had on a small suspender dress in the same colour over a long white sleeved shirt. It was one of the lolitta collections that Katsuki used to model for when he was little. It came with laces and large buttons. Her horn was hidden by a strand of hair. Mammon or Lussuria might have dug it out for her to wear.

She was nervous and shy around people but she looked healthier than before. Maybe Belphegor had something to do with the new meat added to her bones.

The prince liked to hold Katsuki up and throw him. Katsuki found it to be an annoying habit but he never got into a real fight with Bel about it. There was a reason why the prince did that. When they were younger, Katsuki's mother used to still chide him about his weight. It was a force of habit from her profession, Katsuki guessed. She was obsessed with the number of pounds on a scale and she made sure he knew to watch it too. One time, he had gained some weight and she hadn't given him anything other than a pack of carrots and water for three days straight. He was already lightheaded when he visited Varia and Bel had thrown knives at him like usual.

Katsuki couldn't dodge those, not when he was seeing stars and his muscles were like sponges.

He didn't get hurt thanks to Squalo's quick reflexes but he did faint, which gave the assassins a scare. They were professional killers, not nannies and they were basically kids themselves too so it was a panicking ruckus trying to treat Katsuki.

After that, the swordsman told him to hell with his mother, if he was hungry, he would eat. Stash food around the house or money in hideouts and buy stuff to eat on his own. Squalo could understand the need to starve to prepare themselves for possible torture if they got captured or if they were on a stake out mission, but starving a child because they didn't meet an impossible weight standard was absurd. Varia even stuffed their fridge full with food so all of its members would have something to eat whenever they wanted.

He made sure Katsuki knew that too.

Katsuki couldn't be Varia quality if he was paper thin with twig limbs.

Bel got into a habit of checking Katsuki's weight after that too. He might have killed his royal pain in the ass twin brother (who he would gladly kill again and wouldn't miss at all) but he hadn't planned on killing Katsuki, even by accident. He would be down one playmate and Xanxus wouldn't be too happy once he woke up from his chilly nap. But there was no way the prince would do something pleasantly or creepy like monitor Katsuki's weight down to the exact decimal point so he usually just estimated by throwing Katsuki around.

If he thought Katsuki was too light, then they would raid the fridge for strawberry milk and other people's secret stashes of the good stuff (cause a prince never settled for anything less than royal standards). Or when they got older, Bel liked to pay with credit cards that he swept off of local hitmen (usually his excess kills when he had missions) and order food that they could share while hanging out on rooftops.

Belphegor told Katsuki that he liked Varia. It was fun. There was murder and violence and lots of blood, which he loved. The people around the castle weren't ideal but he still liked these peasants, even if he wanted to stab a few on his good day and kill a lot more on the worse ones. Boss was king and he was alright with that too. Princes got more fun and less responsibilities than kings. They were missing a queen and princess though.

Queen he didn't dare think about (Xanxus would burn him to charcol) but Katsuki was a passable princess, even if he didn't have royal blood

or the right bits between his legs. So far, that was the kindest and probably most sibling-like thing Bel had ever said to him.

“Why did you bring her back to Japan?” Katsuki asked. He finally knew who she was from all the amber alerts balring a few weeks ago. This girl was Midoriya and Kirishima’s mission target. They were supposed to save her from the Yakuza.

Too bad Levi got to her first.

“Don’t worry, we got Mammon.” Squalo ran a hand through his hair. “She’s still unstable and rain flames or quirk cancelers are the only things that could have her under control. Stain’s out one a mission too so I don’t want to leave her at the castle with the mooks.”

“Oi, kid!” Levi ordered. “Come and say hi to Boss’s lover.”

“H-Hello,” the girl said slowly, eyes wide with curiosity as she looked up at Katsuki. She had been asleep the whole time the last time Levi brought her over to Katsuki’s house. “I’m Eri. It’s nice to meet you.”

Levi looked proud and it was kind of disturbing. He picked her up and showed her to Katsuki like he would with a trophy. Levi was probably using Eri as a trial run for how to care for Matilde.

“She’s alive, healthy, and can run one lap without dropping now.”

“You made her run laps around the training field?” Varia’s training field was big. It might be too much for a girl locked in a room for the most part of her life up to now to handle.

“Of course not,” Levi replied easily. “Around the castle.”

Katsuki stomped on the man’s foot with the sharp end of his heel and Levi dropped the girl into Katsuki’s arms. She was tense for a second before relaxing.

“You all suck at parenting,” Katsuki said as he held her closer. She seemed surprised at the gesture but eventually settled and tucked herself in under his chin hesitantly.

“Parenting is not part of the Varia aptitude test,” Levi uttered while hopping around on one foot. “Our specialty is untraceable and impossible assassinations.”

“Boss is in the room on the left back there, we’re going to the

ceremony. There's another of ours you can order around if you need anything." Squalo pointed to the corner and there was another Varia member standing there, probably the poor soul on shadow duty this week. Katsuki had seen him around the castle before.

Xanxus came to Japan too, which was why Katsuki was summoned today. He wasn't invited to the inheritance ceremony but he was needed here to calm his boyfriend's raging storm.

"Ushishi, you're going to survive this, Princess." Bel patted Katsuki on the shoulder as he passed by. Mammon nodded at the blond and Lussuria handed Katsuki a bag of stuff that he was sure he shouldn't be opening in front of children.

After the Varia officers cleared out, Katsuki patted the girl on her back and sighed. His tone softened when he turned to her. "Eri, right? How do you like living with Varia?"

He was more Victoire right now. Kids tended to like her better. As expected, the girl seemed to relax some more. Her eyes really were red like Katsuki's.

"It's…confusing?" she answered quietly. Uncertainty and apprehension were covering all the lines on her body. Katsuki heard the PTSD was bad but to see it in person? He wanted to get Mukuro and tell the illusionist to fucking do his worse on Chisaki. Again. "Mr. Leviathan has a scary face but he said no one would hurt me like Chisaki did again but everybody here…attack each other?"

She stared at him, confused.

"But they get back up like nothing happened. There are a lot of sharp things around the pretty castle. Bel said he's a prince and he gives me rabbit apples but he also likes to throw knives at the apples. Mr. Squalo is very loud and I don't think he likes me that much…still, he said that his flames could keep my power under control so I don't have to worry about hurting people. Lussuria takes care of me and Mammon keeps saying I am useful…but they never force me to a lab or hurt me like Chisaki does."

Her body trembled a bit whenever Chisaki's name came up. Yep, Katsuki was going to get Mukuro to pay Chisaki's nightmares a visit one way or another.

"How can I be useful when I'm not hurting?"

That question was what made Katsuki snap. Well, guess he was playing the part of a therapist to two kids today. Katsuki set her down on the sofa with him gently.

“Listen, you can forget about everything Chisaki ever said to you.” Katsuki smiled at her. “Those guys…they look terrifying and they certainly aren’t nice people but they are family and family takes care of each other. You have their back and they have yours.”

“Family?” Her eyes were watery. Oh shit, please don’t tell him the waterworks were starting. “B-But I-I, Papa…he…and Mama is gone… Chisaki was the only one left.”

She was sobbing instead of talking, which made understanding her tough but Katsuki had seen the reports. Mukuro gave him a run down too. She got a powerful quirk, rewinded her dad into nonexistence by accident, mom couldn’t handle it and dropped her off with the Yakuza grandpa, who told his subordinate to take care of her. Instead of taking care of her properly, Chisaki got ahead of himself and tormented her.

Bastard really should have another round through hell.

“Family don’t have to be by blood,” he told her gently, one hand brushing down her back and patting her lightly to soothe the hiccups. “Squalo said he could help you right? He’s strong and he always kept his word. And you must have seen how tight Varia’s security is too. Chisaki couldn’t get to you there. He’s in jail, locked up for life so he can’t touch you anymore. Besides, if everything else fails, we’ve still got Xanxus.”

“Xanxus?” she repeated.

“Boss. Scary guy with scars, the one with beads and feathers in his hair.”

Eri nodded then, understanding who Katsuki was talking about.

“Xanxus is scarier than Chisaki, isn’t he?” Katsuki asked.

She nodded with even more energy this time, agreeing with him.

“See, nothing to worry about then. If Chisaki comes, Xanxus will shoot him dead.”

Eri looked startled by that. Her mouth was gaping like a fish out of

water. “He will?”

“Of course he will, he’s the boss. That’s what bosses do.”

There was a heavy thud from one of the rooms down on the left and Eri stiffened. Katsuki saw the greenish look on the leftover Varia member’s face and he rubbed his temple. Alright, he has a more urgent issue to take care of right now. Katsuki got up.

“Take care of the girl,” he said to the man waiting on the side.

“W-Wait!” Eri called after Katsuki. “I-I don’t know your name.”

“It’s Victoire. Call me Victoire for now.”

The little girl tried to pronounce the name but looked like she was having trouble. Katsuki didn’t have the time though.

“Miss Victoire, I don’t think it’s such a good idea to disrupt Boss at the moment.” The guy’s name was Euclide, cause yes, unlike his shitty boyfriend, Katsuki did bother to learn the Varia members’ names instead of naming them Trash One Two Three. Actually, Xanxus knew their names, he just never bothered to use it until it was necessary.

Xanxus’s good mood was more fragile than paper thin glass ornaments hanging off the the highest point of Tokyo Tower by a spider thread. On a typical day, if he had no urgent work or trouble from anybody, got his food cooked perfectly while served with good alcohol then he *might* approach nice. Not mellowed out. No, those required other very rare conditions to be met in a specific sequence first.

Now wrecking his mood on the other hand was easier than finding a person with black hair on the streets of Japan. Xanxus had ways of making people suffer, and even more tricks to make everybody share his misery. Anything close to him could be a weapon to throw at people, including other people. Now, direct physical violence only followed if he was extra frustrated or annoyed. Casting people out windows or bashing their heads against hard surfaces were standard. The shooting was reserved for when he was fuming. Wrath flames if he was on the edge of seething. Typically, Xanxus wouldn’t bother to get up and crush someone’s bones or torment them in the interrogation dungeons unless there was a *very* good reason for it, like treason or mockery.

But here was the problem, physical violence was normal for Varia. It wouldn’t be any different than what they did on the job. Dodging

bullets or other hazardous objects was like breathing to them. They were more horrified if their boss's anger channeled into *sadism*.

Xanxus was a very capable man and if he set his mind to entertain himself with psychological warfare, there would be mental breakdowns and other excruciating stuff that everybody else agreed to never speak a word about ever again so long as they lived. No one wanted to relive those moments.

No one.

And this was coming from a bunch of Varia quality mafioso. The tougher and sterner portion of any population in both mind and body.

"It's fine. Leave us," Katsuki dismissed him.

"But—"

Katsuki turned around, clicking his tongue in annoyance. "Would *you* rather deal with Xanxus's cruel and unusual punishments when he's in a shitty mood?"

"No, Ma'am." The man backed off immediately. "My apologies for overstepping."

"Just make sure the girl is taken care of and entertained for the day. Keep away from Xanxus's room unless we call for you."

"Yes, Ma'am…and good luck," Euclide added in a hushed voice before taking Eri to another floor.

Katsuki didn't immediately go into Xanxus's room. He went to the room next to it and took a shower. He patted himself dry and prepared himself with the lube that Lussuria got him. He wasn't sure if Xanxus would be interested in sex today but he knew for certain the man wouldn't have the patience for foreplay if they were to do it. The body lotion had a slightly sweet smell to it but nothing too strong and once applied, it left his skin shimmering. No makeup, just a bit of lip balm and he was nice and pretty in his white dress.

Taking a deep breath, he went next door and the door barely creaked open a crack before a glass shattered against it violently.

"Fuck off." The voice from inside the room completely shrouded in darkness was low and dangerous. Hoarse too, sounding like he had been drinking but Katsuki knew Xanxus wasn't anywhere close to

drunk at all.

The air inside the room was dense and the smell of alcohol along with burnt ash filled it, making it intoxicating and even taking a whiff felt like it was going to make Katsuki drunk. His spine tingled in anticipation of imminent danger as if there was a giant carnivorous wild beast inside (which was probably true to an extent).

This was very much like entering a lion's den with absolutely nothing to defend himself with. Even if his quirk had nothing to do with premonition, Katsuki still felt like he saw a flash of himself being engulfed by the burning wrath and nothing, not even his bones would be left at the end.

Well, here goes nothing.

Chapter End Notes

Next one should be smut and Eri POV of her life in Varia.

...I think I love Xanxus a little too much. He's like a childhood crush so LOL, I really do like him lots. On a side note, I wonder if anyone remembers Beyblade? I used to be obsessed with that show. Now when I go back to check the anime again and I'm like...I don't get why I loved it so much when I was little???? Like, none of the plot makes sense to me right now.

Slight spoiler below:

There was an arc where the MC group got kidnapped to an island and they are forced to defeat villains standing in their way and my first thought now is that...they really shouldn't have duel with beyblades. They could have just physically knocked out the villains cause the villains aren't trained in marital arts and they don't have any guns or weapons beside their beyblade but two of the MC's group are (one is even supposed to be a kung fu master). Saved a hell lot of time. But that might just be me being spiteful and not wanting them to play by the villain's rules XD

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

> WARNING: Mentions of MPREG
>
> Also, this story is such crack that I don't even know what I'm writing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Everything felt like a dream. Or maybe it was supposed to be a nightmare.

Eri wasn't sure how to distinguish between the two anymore.

She had been bad. She tried to run from Chisaki again. Luck must have been on her side because she got really close. She made it to the outside and a busy street with lots of people. It was scary and her feet hurt but she hadn't noticed it when she was so focused on running.

Her lungs burned and her knees ached but people noticed her.

There was a green haired boy and a blond one who noticed she needed help. They looked like good people. Heroes. Chisaki hated heroes and often called them "diseased" but Eri remembered when Daddy was still around, they used to watch heroes on the news together.

His hand was warm and large on her head.

Chisaki's hands were cold and rubbery because he always wore gloves when he touched her.

And then she got caught. Chisaki caught up to her and the boys were talking to him. They would die. Eri knew they would die. Chisaki would touch them once and they would explode with that scary popping sound.

Eri didn't want the boy with the warm hands to die.

So she went back with Chisaki. If she stayed good, he wouldn't punish anyone else. She *had* to be good.

Looking back, she wasn't really sure where she hoped she could have gone either. Mommy didn't want her and Daddy was gone because of her. Grandpa…she hadn't seen that man in a very long time, not since he gave her to Chisaki.

And all that was left in her world was fear.

Maybe Chisaki was right, she would only bring misfortune to others and it was too dangerous for her to be out there. What if she lost control? Other people would disappear like Daddy. Chisaki was the only one who could make her stop. No one else would be able to handle her and they would think she was a monster.

She was a monster with no control of her power. Monsters had to be restrained.

People turn into splatters of blood if she misbehaved so she had to be good.

But it hurted so much.

Eri wanted to get away from Chisaki's cold hands. She wanted to run from that dark room in the maze and the even colder lab with its leather straps that would hold her down on the metal chair. The needles and knives and everything else were also cold and they hurted her. She didn't like them.

She was going to get hurt again. Eri wasn't really sure what Chisaki did with her blood and flesh but she didn't dare ask. All she knew was that he didn't like her to scream or cry so she had to make sure she stayed quiet. Behave and no one else gets hurt.

No one else would suffer.

Chisaki scolded her as he worked. The pain made it hard for Eri to understand what he was saying.

"No one out there wants you. You have no skills to survive on your own either. Who do you think is going to feed you and give you clothing? A roof over your head?"

…Yes, her power was too destructive. No one else would want such an unstable danger around them. The green haired boy and the blond boy, they were nice people. They tried to help her but they didn't understand how strong Chisaki was.

Even if she went with them, she didn't know if she would hurt them accidentally.

And no one else would be able to fix them.

Chisaki fixed her up at the end of the session like he always does. He had work to do so one of his helpers would come to bring her back to her room. Chisaki told her to wait.

Eri waited. She was cold and the bandages around her limbs were fresh. The medicine was cool but it still felt like her skin was burning underneath. Ouches took a long time to heal, not because she healed slowly or Chisaki couldn't fix her properly, but because there would always be new scars layered on top of the old ones.

The metal door opened again.

There was a large man at the door dressed in all black. He had silver on his face, small piercings and thin chains that she sometimes saw on people who would bring her food. He was a large man, larger than Chisaki and he had a scary face.

She didn't know who he was. He wasn't one of her handlers. Maybe Chisaki decided to send someone else to guard her? He certainly was more terrifying than the others.

She expected him to yell at her.

But the man did a strange thing. He destroyed the equipment that Chisaki said was expensive. There was a large flash of light and Eri's memory of what happened after it was fuzzy. She might have cried but she couldn't really remember.

When she woke up again, she was in a castle.

A castle. Like in the fairytales.

Eri was not allowed to go outside or play with other kids (she would hurt them, bring them bad luck) but if she was good, sometimes Chisaki's helpers showed her story books. One time Chisaki had been extra happy and he let Kurono show her an old movie. It was about a princess with red hair.

Her name was Anastasia.

Eri had spent most of her life in Chisaki's basement. The four walls

were white and the floor a light shade of grey. There were no other colours allowed in the basement and the labs since Chisaki liked to keep things clean. Her room was painted a light pink but it still felt cold. While she did remember a few things about her parent's house, those memories were clouded by a hazy fog. Blurry and hard to distinguish between what was what.

This castle looked like one from the movies. She woke up on a bed that was way too large and she could probably roll on it several times without falling off. The ground was covered in a soft carpet and there were giant windows revealing a bright blue sky.

Eri could see the forest on the outskirt of the castle.

She didn't dare move from the bed. It was too big and too tall. She was scared of all the unfamiliar stuff too but the room had a nice smell, it smelled sweet and warm.

The man with the piercings was back. He gave her new clothing and told her to wash up and change. Eri had a lot of questions but she held them in, doing what she was told. She didn't see Kurono or Chisaki… which was strange since she was sure it was time for her to be in the lab again.

The bathroom was just as big as her room back in the basement. Everything looked so shiny that she wasn't sure if she was allowed to touch anything.

Eri was wearing something other than the plain dress Chisaki gave her for once. The dress was a little loose on her but it was in a very soft fabric that she didn't know what it was called. And she got shoes, white sneakers. The man, Levi as he called himself, took her out of the room. He didn't touch her or grab her like her usual handlers would, just told her to follow.

He was a big man so Eri had to run to catch up to him.

The colour theme of the castle was darker but it was just like the fairytales, like the one the princess was dancing through. There were the long corridors and paintings, carved art, statues, and lots of other decorations that made Eri's head fuzzy because she didn't know where to look first. Heavy curtains and wooden furniture, the hallways were lit by the sunlight coming in from the large windows. The shadows and the lights moved across their bodies as they walked down the stairs.

“VOOOOIII! What the fuck are you doing with that?”

Someone shouted from above and Eri instinctively held her hands over her head and hunched her shoulders. Loud noises scared her. Chisaki always caused a loud noise when he made someone explode and she hated it when he yelled at her. Her body trembled as she peeked.

There was another man. He had long silver hair like the moon and he had a scary aura around him too. She smelled blood on him. Eri was all too familiar with the scent. Something glistening was attached to his left hand and it was a sword. The blood dripped down the tip of his sword.

She took a step back, scared and confused about why the man was swinging around a sword. He sounded angry. Was he going to hurt her with the sword? But Chisaki wasn't around to fix her.

Mr. Levi was talking to the man and the man looked less annoyed, eyeing her occasionally. They were speaking in this weird language that Eri never heard of before. The man packed his sword away and he bent down in front of Eri, studying her.

She stood frozen while he scanned her over. He scowled and Eri flinched away. She wasn’t sure if she should keep still or maybe he wanted her to say something first. His eyes landed on her bandages and he yelled at Mr. Levi and Mr. Levi handed him a flashdrive.

They took her to another room. This one didn’t look like a bedroom. It had a long table and there was food on the table along with a few other people who were already seated. There was a blond boy with a tiara and a…baby in a cloak? Then there was also a man with sunglasses and a pink feather coat.

The blond was playing with daggers, which made Eri’s spine crawl but the silver haired man plopped her down on a seat at the end of the table, far away from everyone else. They were talking again and she still couldn’t understand. It was very confusing and scary.

Were they talking about her? Was Chisaki going to join them soon? No, Chisaki didn’t like to eat with other people.

Eri shrunk into her overly large seat with all the eyes focusing on her.

“Ushishishi, she looks very weak,” the blond boy said as he shuffled his daggers. They were floating between his palms. Was that his quirk? “Are you sure she’s the right one?”

“I found her in a lab, of course she’s looking under the weather,” Mr. Levi scoffed as he sat down. He caught a dagger flying towards his face between his fingers and Eri almost screamed. No loud noises. She didn’t want to anger them…even if she didn’t know who they were yet.

“Oh you poor thing!” The man with the sunglasses gushed at her and Eri wanted to run when he got closer. He was speaking in Japanese now. “Don’t worry, Big sister Lussuria is here! We’ll check you over and make sure you heal up all nice and well in no time!”

Big Sis? But he looked like a man? Eri was confused again.

“Boss still hasn’t said she could stay yet,” the baby said in a calm voice. “Don’t waste your energy.”

Boss. Eri wasn’t sure who that was. Maybe they were talking about Chisaki? Boss used to be the man she should call Grandpa but Chisaki ran things now.

“Where’s that shitty boss anyways?” the silver haired man asked. “His steak is going to get cold if he doesn’t show his ass soon.”

He got shoved out of the way roughly the next second. Eri had her back to the door so she couldn’t see who came in but she could feel the atmosphere in the room changed. Mr. Levi sat up a bit straighter and the blond boy’s grin was slightly more reserved. Lussuria settled back to his seat and the man with the sword grumbled something before sitting down too.

Eri could feel a presence coming near. It was a strong and exigent (she learned that word later from Mr. Levi) one. Eri gulped nervously as she kept her eyes on the polished plate and forks in front of her. She didn’t dare to turn around and look.

“Boss,” the toddler in a cloak greeted.

Was it Chisaki? He didn’t call her name like usual but Eri felt like her heart was going to jump out of her throat any second.

Footsteps came closer. It was light and it didn’t really sound like Chisaki’s footsteps. Someone sat down at the chair at the other end of the long table directly across from Eri.

“Look up, trash.”

The voice wasn't loud but it was commanding. Low and authoritative, without even the barest hint of warmth like Chisaki sometimes would talk to her with. Eri flinched slightly but looked up and saw another unfamiliar man. He had sharp red eyes, darker ones than Eri's, and meeting his eyes was like being forced to stare down a large lion while trapped in the same cage with the beast. He was a large man too, not as large as Mr. Levi but still very big in Eri's eyes. There were feathers, fur, and beads in his raven hair along with nasty scars on his face. A black uniform jacket was over his shoulders but he wore his clothing loosely, nothing like the neatness that Chisaki preferred.

He was scarier than the rest of the group in the room combined.

"Name."

It took her a few seconds to understand that he was asking for her name. "E-Eri…Sir."

"Your quirk, it only works on living shit?"

"…Yes." She managed to nod but if she wasn't sitting already, she might have collapsed on the ground. He was studying her like the silver haired man did earlier, just felt even more intense and a lot scarier.

"How do you activate it?"

"I…I…my hands…" Eri felt funny. She was feeling the fuzzies in her head again and tears were threatening to fall from her eyes. It was hard hard keep her tongue untied in front of the man's piercing gaze. She was tired and hungry as well but even if the food on the table smelled nice, she didn't dare to ask if she could have any later. Another part of her also struggled. She was hungry but she couldn't trust food from strangers.

"Can't control it?" There was a sharp toothy grin that made Eri yelped but she held her hands over her mouth to prevent more noises from coming out. She nodded to answer him instead, not waiting to keep him waiting.

The scary man said nothing afterwards as he dug into his food, pouring himself a glass of red liquid to go with his meal too. The other people in the room also started eating.

"So are we keeping her, Boss?" Mr. Levi asked.

Boss didn't look up from his food. "Keep her away from the main halls. I don't want to see the trash's pathetic face."

"Yes Sir."

Boss didn't like her. Eri shivered, both in fear and nervousness. She wasn't sure if she had the right to get mad at him for calling her a bad word but she wasn't brave enough to speak up against him either.

He didn't sound like he was going to kick her out though. Maybe she was going to stay with this Boss until Chisaki came to collect her?

Meat and vegetables were placed onto her plate.

"Eat up, Honey." Lussuria smiled at her. "And welcome to the family. You'll love it here!"

Eri didn't believe him.

—---

The silver haired man with a sword was named Superbi Squalo and people called him "Captain". Captain of what? Maybe a ship perhaps? But she didn't see any ships around the castle. He let Eri stay in the room she woke up in. The bed was still too high and big but they gave her a stool to climb on and off of.

There were maids in the castle and they...were not scary but Eri didn't trust them either. Sometimes the maids looked at her and whispered about stuff that she couldn't understand. They treat her like how Chisaki's helpers used to treat her. Careful and distant, the smiles were fake too.

Not all of the people in the castle spoke Japanese. Mr. Levi sometimes left her with a man with no nose called Stain, who came from the same country as her (or that was what she was told). The world beyond the four cold walls was a big place. There were so many different countries and Eri was amazed with the model of the globe they lived on.

Stain told her that the blond boy with the tiara was Belphegor and the baby she saw was Mammon. Just like Mr. Squalo and Mr. Levi, they were very important and dangerous people. Eri shouldn't upset them. Big Sis Lussuria too, Eri had to be good for all of them or she might get hurt.

Life here was different from when she was still in Chisaki's basement.

Eri woke up early and she would have breakfast in the little corner in the kitchen while the rest of the kitchen staff worked. There were more people than she was used to but she quickly adjusted when she realized they didn't really care what she did as long as she didn't stick her hand in a pot of boiling oil. It was strange but she observed. She watched them hurried and work, chatting with very animated hand gestures.

After that, she would be taught how to read and write from Stain. Captain Squalo expected her to know the basics of both Japanese and Italian. It was very hard and confusing but Eri was scared of Mr. Squalo and she didn't want to make him upset. Her afternoons were then spent running and stretching. Nothing else. Just running around the castle and stretching out like she was a gymnast on the videos the adults showed him. She ran until she dropped, lungs burning like there was fire burning inside and muscles felt like they were melting. Other people were running too. They were also mean looking but they would scoop her up and bring her back to the castle if she passed out.

There were no hugs or warm pats on the head like she sometimes remembered her parents did but they didn't hurt her either. Eri didn't have time to think about Chisaki or why she was in this castle either. Usually she was too tired to even have the energy to walk straight, let alone worry about if her quirk would accidentally hurt someone.

Big Sis Lussuria taught her how to bandage herself up. Stain was her language tutor. Mr. Levi was the one who took her out of the labs.

Eri didn't know if this was worse than when she was with Chisaki. No one would strap her to a metal chair and hurt her like Chisaki did. They were loud and short with her but they also gave her lots of yummy treats and a big bright room with big windows. Of course, she couldn't leave the castle and there were a lot of places she wasn't allowed in either. Boss's office and his room were both on the list of places she was to stay away from.

But this was already better than the basement. She could visit the gardens and the sun was warm. She could pick flowers or go on the swing made of woven wood and vine and no one would scold her for it.

The swing was a new thing that she learned to associate with fun.

Stain sat her down on it and pushed her once. It felt like she was

flying.

She once asked Mr. Squalo when she would be returned to Chisaki. He looked at her with this strange look before kneeling down in front of her.

“You want to go back to that Chisaki guy?”

No. She didn’t.

Eri shook her head.

“Then you don’t have to,” Mr. Squalo stated in a lower voice. He didn’t soften his tone but Eri could kind of tell he wasn’t angry or annoyed. “Besides, that guy’s done for already. He’s in jail.”

“Jail?” she repeated. That was…where people put villains right?

“Yeah, jail. Locked up. Damn sadistic brats got carried away with their revenge. Should have just slice the fucker in half if you ask me.”

She didn’t get what he was talking about but he waved, signalling that she didn’t need to think too hard about it at all.

“Then…I can stay here?” Eri asked with a bit of hope. It was very tiring and she often got startled living here but if she had to pick between the basement and here, she chose *here*.

“As long as you prove yourself useful. Varia is no place for useless trash.”

“What do I have to do to be useful?” She didn’t want to get kicked out. Being left alone sounded scarier than it should be right now, which was strange because a few weeks ago she would have preferred for Chisaki’s men to not be in the same room as her at all.

Be useful. Eri wasn’t sure what that meant exactly. She helped the chefs and maids occasionally with very small chores and she tried to learn even if her head hurt from staring at the books. Did that make her useful to them?

“Eat, sleep, keep running to build up stamina, and make yourself literate.” Mr. Squalo scratched his head. “That should be about it for now. When you pack some meat on your bones we’ll see what we can do about training your quirk.”

Eri felt like she had been drenched in ice water. Her quirk. It was

always about her quirk. Daddy and Mommy were gone because of her quirk and Chisaki only wanted her because of her quirk.

These people also wanted her quirk.

But she had nowhere else to go.

“I-I don’t know if I can,” she whispered as her nightmares haunted her head. Chisaki’s voice seemed to merge with her own when she opened her mouth again. “I’m cursed. My power will only bring misfortune and hurt other—”

Blue flames lit up in Squalo’s opened palm. It wasn’t hot and it vanished quickly.

“We have ways of dealing with it if it goes out of control.” The man got up and picked her off the ground too. Her feet swung in the air as they moved down the hall. “You’re a damn piece of trash so just follow orders and you might survive to adulthood. No need to overthink.”

He dropped her outside of Stain’s room.

“Go back to studying,” he ordered. “There are no children in the mafia so you better not slack off.”

Eri went back to her books. She knew the men keeping her now weren’t good people.

The mafia were villains like the yakuza. Eri had heard Chisaki or his people mumbled about the mafia before. They were dangerous too.

Also, she had seen Mr. Levi hit his subordinates so hard that they bled and Mr. Squalo coming back covered in other people’s blood. She didn’t see Mammon around often but the toddler would always remind her that she needed to prove herself useful when the time comes. Big Sis Lussuria was probably the only one who was a bit nicer than the rest but his room was filled with…*realistic* dolls.

They were dead people. Even Eri could tell that. It gave her nightmares, a different kind of nightmare than the ones that Chisaki usually showed up in. Eri thought about running again but she had no idea how to get out of the castle without someone escorting her. The place was just too big and wired with lots of traps that she knew would hurt her a lot if she misstepped.

Belphegor was another weird one. He would skin apples into the shape of little rabbits for her if he was in a good mood but also liked to tell her to place an apple over her head and throw knives at the apples. It always made her tense with freight but that seemed to entertain him.

Eri decided to stay away from Belphegor as much as possible. Not even apple pies could change her mind.

Somedays, when everybody was busy then Eri would be left on her own. She could wander the castle if she wanted but the exits all had guards so she mainly stayed in the garden or inside the castle.

It was like a treasure hunt. All the rooms of the castle were very similar. Heavy curtains and luxurious decorations, along with some weird stuff that Eri didn't understand why they should be there. Like the head of a dead animal. She got spooked by a few of those since the rooms were always dark and their turbid eyes would be staring right at her.

However, she found a room filled with very pretty things today. Dresses of all kinds and lace with ribbons. Eri could feel her mouth forming a small o when she saw the countless rows of heels and all the tiaras and jeweries. She thought the clothing she was given was nice already but these? These were for real princesses!

Was there a princess living in the castle? Maybe there was one. It was a castle after all. There was a prince and Belphegor said that Boss was the king so there must be a queen and a princess too. Eri hadn't explored a large portion of the castle because they were off limits to her. Everything was so sparkly in this room that Eri had to hold her breath and tiptoe out of it because she didn't want to get anything dirty.

Her mind had been too preoccupied by the glamorous dresses that she might have taken a wrong turn and now she didn't know where she was. Eri spun around on the spot, trying to figure out which way to go but all the corners looked so similar. The hallways here were darker since all the curtains were closed, sealing off any chance of the sun from leaking in. Eri wasn't tall enough to reach the light switch either.

She got a bit worried. She wasn't supposed to be here. She was being a bad kid and people might be looking for her.

Eri didn't want to cause Mr. Levi or anyone else trouble but she really had no idea where she was. Everything here looked unfamiliar and

there was no one around to help her.

There was a room at the end of the hall with the door slightly opened. Eri peeked through the crack and she smelled something sweet. It was very faint but sugary like the heated sugar the chefs sometimes added to to make a shiny glaze on the desserts. Eri loved it when they dipped apples in it.

She poked her head a little more into the room, trying to figure out where the sweet smell was coming from. It was a large room and the furnishing in there looked extra expensive and lush but everything was tidy. It was still dark inside the room, the lights weren't on and the curtains were sealed shut too. Turning her head around, Eri gasped quietly as she stumbled back and landed on her bum. It took everything in her to not shriek as she met those predatory scarlet eyes that looked unnaturally bright and sharp in the shadows.

Boss.

Her face paled. Eri hadn't had not seen the man since that one meal time. Normally she wouldn't be allowed to eat with the higher officers so she usually ate in her room or in the quiet corner in the kitchen. Mr. Levi and Mr. Squalo warned her to not bother Boss. She had to stay away from Boss *or else*. The underlying threat of being hurt was clear as day since she had seen how other members in the castle went to Lussuria's infirmary, all injured in various ways. They were hurt in a different way than Chisaki used to hurt people. Chisaki's victims were red and splattered. These people were more black and blue, battered and adorned with bruises or scraps. Both looked painful to her.

Stain said they made Boss angry. They were too weak and Boss despised the weak, that was why they were hurt. If she didn't want to get hurt, she shouldn't show her face in front of Boss.

Eri was weak.

Her muscles weren't as large as Mr. Squalo's and she wasn't as tall as Mr. Levi. She couldn't throw knives like Belphegor or run laps like Stain…so she was weak. The weakest one in the castle.

Boss didn't like her.

The man sitting in the dark had his feet on the wooden table and he peered at her through half opened eyes. He was like how she saw him last time, a dominating presence that seemed to fill up the space,

leaving no chance of escape or room to breathe. His shirt was unbuttoned and the colourful feathers and beads with fur decorated his hair.

“What are you doing here, trash?” Boss asked in a guttural voice that signaled displeasure.

“I got lost,” Eri answered in a very meek and careful manner. She wasn’t supposed to be here and she got caught being in a place that she didn’t belong at. Was he going to punish her like he did with the other people?

“Stupid girl," he huffed but didn't bother to move from his spot. The man pointed to the side, where a wall was full of wine bottles. "Go get me a bottle of Whiskey.”

Eri hurried over but she stopped in front of the wall. Which one was the Whiskey? She couldn’t read the complicated labels on the bottles yet. Would Boss get mad if she got the wrong bottle?

“Left lower corner, just grab any one of them.”

His voice made her jump but she quickly grabbed a bottle and carried it over to him. Boss poured the alcohol into a cup on his desk and drank in silence. He didn’t say thank you (but no one else in this castle did either), like it was normal for him to be commanding people around. Eri supposed that was the case. Belphegor said Boss was the king of the castle so of course he got to order people around.

She wasn’t sure if she was dismissed so she stayed a few steps away from Boss.

“You haven’t started training your quirk yet, have you?”

“No, S-Sir."

He glanced at her, face unreadable and lips still pulled tight. "Then you start tomorrow. Tell Lussuria to order you some bugs to test on."

Surprised, Eri looked up but quickly casted her eyes back to the floor when she saw the man's cold gaze.

"But my quirk…" It was a curse. Too dangerous. Chisaki never let her use her quirk except when they first started and he needed experimental data. Eri didn't know how to use it either, even if she activated it, how could she stop it?

"You start tomorrow," Boss repeated with a scowl. "The shitty shark will watch you."

Boss meant Mr. Squalo. The silver haired man could produce this blue flame that made Eri feel like a snail and her quirk was calmer when the fire touched her.

"Everybody in Varia has a duty here. It's time you prove your worth." Boss went back to drinking. He really liked his liquor.

Eri was confused and scared but she couldn't find any courage to object to what Boss wanted. Talking back to him was a daunting idea that was just too impossible to fathom so she found another question instead. "...How do I do that?"

They had a purpose for her and Eri didn't think it had anything to do with fixing bugs. Prove her worth. People keep telling her that but they never told her how to do it. Mr. Squalo said she had to keep running and learn to read and write. Belphegor just seemed to want to scare her and the others…Eri wasn't sure what they wanted with her exactly. Big Sis Lussuria liked to dress her up but he was always talking about this other girl, saying those were her clothing when she was little.

Eri kind of wanted to meet the other girl but she didn't live in the castle.

Boss didn't answer her.

Eri tried to open her mouth again but she didn't really know what to say. Struggling, the girl stared at the man with all the scary scars and intimidating red eyes. She had more freedom in Boss's castle than she did in Chisaki's basement. No one would cut her up (but Belphegor might be trying) or tell her mean things. They gave her good food and a very comfortable bed. When she was sick or feeling funny, they didn't deconstruct her and rebuild her in a white sizzling pain either.

Boss looked scarier than Chisaki but Eri didn't hate it here. Not like she hated the basement and her windowless room.

"...I never thanked Mr. Levi properly for taking me away from Chisaki." Eri silently cheered herself on. She was talking to Boss and she hadn't started crying yet. She could do this. "Mr. Squalo said I don't have to go back to him. They are like heroes."

That was supposed to be a compliment. Chisaki hated heroes but Eri

heard enough from his rants that the outsiders considered being compared to heroes a compliment. She was complimenting the people that took her in.

It was hard to tell if this was what being saved felt but as long as Chisaki couldn't hurt her anymore, Eri thought whatever else she had to endure was alright.

To her surprise, Boss laughed. It was a cold and sinister laughter but it was still a laugh, like he heard a funny joke. Boss got up and hauled her off the ground. People here liked to do that a lot. They liked to grab her from her waist or behind her collar and move her around because she was too slow. It was uncomfortable but Eri didn't protest. Even if she did, no one cared either.

The weak didn't have a say in Varia.

"There are no fucking heroes here, trash."

Boss had long legs and they were back to a familiar part of the castle soon. Mr. Levi and Mr. Squalo were down the stairs.

"She starts quirk training tomorrow," Boss announced.

"Tomorrow?" Mr. Squalo frowned. "It's too fucking early for that shit. She could barely do a lap around the castle and she's still got a lot of reading to catch up on. Fucking wuss still got night terrors and too much stimuli overwhelms her too. She's unstable!"

Boss tilted his head. "If she can't be of any use in a fight, she's got to be worth something in the infirmary."

Mr. Squalo bared his teeth. "Goddamn it, do you know how much work I got? I ain't got time to babysit. The other person who's got some handle on his rain flames so far is Stain but he's not good enough yet."

"Make it happen."

Boss placed a rough hand on Eri's head and Eri blinked in confusion. Boss's hand was not gentle but it was warm, heated like the scorching sun. His speech, however, was as cold as always. "No hero or Prince Charming is going to come save you every time you are in trouble. You learn to slay your own dragons or get eaten."

He tossed her down the stairs and she yelped as she fell into Mr. Levi's

arms. Eri was still trembling, unable to shake the fear of being flung into the air. Flying on the swing was fun. Flying by being tossed was not.

“Ushishishi, does that mean we get to test her powers on the ones we’re keeping in the dungeons? Haven’t gotten all the info out of them yet.” Belphegor jumped down the railing.

Who were they keeping in the dungeon? Was it the bad people that Mammon brought back last time? They said the men were trespassing.

“No, let’s start her with insects and reptiles first.” Mr. Squalo sighed in exasperation. “She already got a late start but it's a pain to have to slash her and wait for her to heal up if she went berserker. Also Bel, where the fuck is your report? That shit was due yesterday!”

“Ushishishi, the prince doesn’t like paperwork.”

“Fucking hell Bel, I swear to God if you don’t—Come back here, you little shit!”

Eri watched as Mr. Squalo pulled out his sword on Belphegor. They fought a lot. People in this castle were always fighting but that was normal (Was it really normal? Eri didn’t remember Chisaki’s people fighting violently like this so much). Soon, Mr. Levi got involved somehow and he also joined the fight.

It was too much for Eri. The noises and the fists. The kicks and the tense atmosphere…everything made her too nervous to function. She climbed underneath a table and hid under the tablecloth. Holding her hands over her ears, she started counting while she waited for it all to be over.

Mr. Levi’s face enlarged in front of her. He had been beaten down and slid over.

“What are you doing?” The man had blood running down his nose.

“I’m scared.” About failing. About the possible punishments if she couldn’t meet their expectations. About what she was supposed to do when everybody else started fighting.

Mr. Levi pulled her out from under the table roughly. “Just follow Boss’s orders and everything will be alright.”

Okay. That didn’t sound too hard. Boss had warm hands. If she did

everything he told her to, maybe he would pat her on the head like Daddy used to? More gentle and less intense.

"Don't disappoint Boss." Mr. Levi stared at her, expression very serious and even more unnerving than he usually was. Eri wasn't as scared of him though. Mr. Levi looked mean but he helped her escape Chisaki and gave her a place to stay for now.

Eri wanted to know more about Mr. Levi and everybody else in the castle. If they weren't heroes, then what were they? Villains? They didn't seem like the villains Chisaki talked about , the ones who abused their quirks and were diseased, to her. Who owned all the pretty dresses in the room? Why was Boss the Boss?

She wanted to find some answers.

Don't disappoint Boss.

Eri could do that.

Or at least she hoped she could.

—---

It was Eri's first time on an airplane...the first time she could remember anyways. They were going somewhere far away from the castle. The airport was big and she was told to stay close to Mammon and Mr. Squalo.

Boss came too. He looked like he was in a very bad mood that not even Mr. Squalo wanted to be near him. Mr. Levi tried but got a boot in the face and he was sulking for the rest of the trip. Eri patted the man on the back but that didn't stop him from feeling sad because of Boss's rejection.

They were back in Japan and Eri was scared again. There were a lot of heroes on the streets but her concern was still about Chisaki. Chisaki was in Japan. What if he found her? He would hurt Boss and the others too.

And it would be Eri's fault.

Eri voiced her concern to Big Sis Lussuria and all of the men (except Boss) bursted into laughter.

"Don't worry, Eri-Chan~" the man said sweetly. "We can take care of

a few yakuza. They don't make them like they used to anyways."

"If they come, we'll just fuck them up." Mr. Squalo coughed into his hand to stop himself from laughing.

"Fuck them up?" Eri repeated, eyes wide with innocence. Fuck was a bad word. Kurono told her that before. But Chisaki's men and the people inside Varia's castle all use it.

He gave her a grin that revealed teeth. "Cut them all up and feed them to the fishes."

That sounded dangerous and scary.

Actually, everything about her new life right now was dangerous and scary.

They checked into a hotel that wasn't as fancy as the castle but still very big too. Mr. Squalo and the rest of the men all changed into black suits while Boss locked himself in his room. He had gone in with a crate of alcohol.

And then a girl came.

She was around Belphegor's age and the prince called her Princess. She looked like a princess too. The girl had blond hair like Cinderella and pale skin like Snow White. Her eyes were red but warmer than Boss's. Kind of like the glazed apple skin. Her dress was white with some lace and pearl chains and it flowed down to her ankles.

Mr. Levi told her to introduce herself to the girl. She was Boss's lover, which meant she was queen of the castle. But Belphegor said she was a princess. Which was it?

She smelled sweet though, like the candles in Boss's room. The girl held her gently and patted her head. Her hand was warm too, not as hot as Boss's but still warm. She was softer than the men in the castle but still more firm than the maids.

The girl said they were family. The people in the castle were Eri's new family and family took care of each other.

Boss would protect Eri if Chisaki came.

That was what bosses did. They protected their own.

What she said didn't sound like Boss. So far, Eri had only seen Boss

eating, drinking, or pulling Mr. Squalo's hair harshly and beating up Mr. Levi. But…Boss had a strong back and very warm hands. Eri wondered if she would finally feel safe and secure if she stayed behind Boss.

Don't disappoint Boss.

Follow orders and she would get to play on the swings and eat delicious apples. She would get to wake up on a comfortable bed (even if it sometimes felt too big like it was going to swallow her up) and draw with crayons. No one would cut her open either.

The girl was going to see Boss. Eri didn't know why she wanted to do that. Boss was angry and terrifying right now.

"Will she…be okay?" Eri asked very slowly in broken Italian. The man with her looked down and half shrugged. He didn't take her hand, all the staff inside the castle (excluding the higher officers and Stain) were warned not to.

"Don't worry about it, kid." The man gestured for her to head towards the elevator. "Let Miss Victoire and Boss sort it out on their own. Trust me, what they are about to do it's probably not going to be so kid friendly."

Eri only understood about half of that sentence. "Don't worry" was part of it.

"Can I see her again?"

"I don't know. Boss will be the one deciding that. If you're good then maybe."

Be good. Okay. Eri would be good. She didn't want to run or disappear like she was with Chisaki so she would be good and stay.

Maybe the girl would let her try one of her tiaras and tell her more about Boss if Eri was a very good girl.

2

The room was in a better state than what Katsuki imagined. No furniture had been broken yet, which was a good sign that his

boyfriend wasn't raging or feeling like going on a murder spree right now. But that meant Xanxus was harboring his fury and bitterness. It was accumulating, building pressure and ticking down the seconds until it blew.

Katsuki didn't run. It was probably suicidal and stupid but he would not run from his lover. If even he couldn't stay by Xanxus's side, then that was pretty pitiful. He also knew the feeling of being flocked by only goons. They ran at the slightest sight of trouble and only came back when he remained victorious. He didn't want to be like them to Xanxus. Goons were replaceable. Katsuki would *never* allow himself to be replaceable.

The room was dark, just like how his boyfriend liked it when he was drinking or brooding, maybe both at the same time. Xanxus sat on the sofa with one arm swung over the back of the sofa and his feet kicked onto the coffee table. A bottle was in his other hand. The label looked Russian. Russian vodka. Katsuki was sure that crap wasn't safe for human consumption, no matter how much the brand tried to advertise it to be.

There was already an empty bottle of it rolling on the floor.

Xanxus didn't acknowledge him. The shirtless man drank while nasty scars crawled along his exposed tanned skin. The frostbites he sustained while being frozen for years expanded, covering large portions of his face and forming rugged patches of skin along his torso and arms. The scars layered over thick muscles, menacing and each told a tale of how much pain the man had endured. Sometimes Katsuki disliked this very open display of machismo but he understood why this was Xanxus's way of dissipating his anger that didn't involve immediate massacres.

He tiptoed over the empty bottle and slid in next to Xanxus.

The Varia boss didn't shift his position to accommodate Katsuki's presence but didn't push him away either. Xanxus just kept drinking, seething under the horrifying silence.

Sometimes when he looked at Xanxus, it felt like he was looking at a mirror.

The anger burning like acid inside their chests was similar. The people that were supposed to love them couldn't understand them. There were lies and betrayal, unattainable expectations and oh god did Katsuki hate that disappointed look on his parents' faces. It was like

nothing they did would ever be good enough because they were just… born wrong. Not right in the head. Too abrasive, too prideful, and too stingy to love.

It wasn't even about being smacked around or the screaming that followed. Neglect sometimes did more damage than any of those things combined. It was a silent killer, chipping away at them from the inside until eventually, their hearts were filled with cracks and everything came shattering down.

He didn't have it as bad as Xanxus, who grew up in the dirty back alley of some piss ass excuse of a neighborhood. It was a place littered with poverty and crime, where the only way to survive was to live like stray dogs. Dug into trash with frostbitten fingers littered with cracking skin and swollen from the cold, ran from villains and heroes because neither side had anything good in store for him, faced threats head on because the only things that were truly safe were in the hands of the strong. Couldn't back down. Back down and he'd be dead. Back down and he would lose a place to sleep or food to keep him and his mother alive. The weak got no say in anything. They die off. They became one with the piles of trash, a disgusting and forgotten mess.

And when he finally had people to call his family, their bonds were held together by suspicions and profits. Power and drive, Xanxus was the perfect mafia man, yet his blood was dirty and he would never be anything more than a shadow, a stepping stone and a pawn on someone else's game board.

Fate preordained that, all because he didn't have the right blood in his veins.

It was unfair and it fucking sucked. To work so hard for something and qualify for it and only to be rejected, unable to do anything but watch the crown fall onto someone lesser who hadn't worked a single day for it…it was a horrible feeling.

The blond placed a soft kiss on his boyfriend's cheek. He could smell the alcohol and it was already making him tipsy. Xanxus pulled the bottle away from his lips and that was the permission Katsuki needed to shift his head, pressing a kiss against the man's mouth.

"Who told you to come?" Xanxus's voice was raspy and lower than normal from the heavy drinking.

"Squalo."

Grunting, Xanxus drained another large gulp of his alcohol. He pulled Katsuki's head back by grabbing the hair on the back of the blond's head and claimed those rosy lips. The liquor poured into Katsuki's mouth when Xanxus shoved his tongue in, the liquid scorched his throat, burning him and made him teary instinctively. This kiss was filled with fury too. It wasn't loving or gentle, it was a kiss to release frustrations and to forget. Clear liquid dripped down Katsuki's chin as he couldn't swallow properly with his tongue tangled with Xanxus's. He wrapped his arms around the assassin's neck.

He was coughing so violently that his cheeks were flushed red by the end of the kiss. The lack of oxygen and the heat from the vodka burned along his nerves and made his brain hazy, like there was a fog in his head. Xanxus's hand was on Katsuki's neck, rough calloused fingers running down along the sensitive skin.

"Get out and play with the girl or something," Xanxus said. "I don't need you here."

But I am here.

I will always be here.

You still have me.

No.

Katsuki wouldn't say those things to his lover. That was pathetic and useless. Xanxus didn't need to be pitied. Katsuki wouldn't need it either. That would just be an insult.

He wasn't here because of love either. He was here because he *cared* about his shitty mouthed and foul tempered sky. Katsuki was the only one who could show up here right now anyways, everybody else was busy with the inheritance ceremony.

This wasn't about love.

In the stories and the legends, they liked to pretend *everything* could be fixed by love. Someone could fix a helpless and tragic soul by picking up all the broken pieces and gluing it back together like it was a kid's art's project.

That wasn't the case in the mafia world. Not everything could be fixed by love and peace. Feuds, mind games, and profits didn't work like that. They could kid themselves all they want about how powerful

love was but at the end of the day, it was status and power that ruled the underworld.

Katsuki had a place besides Xanxus but the man didn't love him.

No amount of love, unconditional love even, could ever satisfy the hole in Xanxus's chest. The hole that had been dug there by witnessing too much darkness since he was born to the streets of Southern Italy. The hole that had been enlarged by the neglect of a deranged mother and torn wide open by the betrayal of his (adoptive) father. People change. People leave. People were hard to understand. Only power and wealth were for certain.

So no, it wasn't romantic love alone that kept them together.

This bond went deeper. It was about trust and loyalties through the whisks of smoke lingering on the barrel of a gun, about promises carved in blood but never spoken out loud. Bel might joke about Katsuki being a princess but Xanxus would never be his knight in shining armour. Katsuki would be there for Xanxus just as strong as the man would be there for him.

Katsuki wasn't sure if Tsunayoshi would be a better Decimo but that kid indeed was a sky. He was the all encompassing and accepting sky of a warm spring day. Tsunayoshi was the bright blue day with a warm sun and gentle rays of light caressing everyone who came under it. Salvation. Hope. Under it, all darkness seemed to be purged.

His Xanxus was a sky as well, the only sky that Katsuki would allow himself to surrender to. Xanxus was the night. Dark, desolated shadows that enveloped all the sins and blood under its cloak, welcoming the chaos and violence to be engulfed by its great presence. He was the emperor of the starless night, ruling all under his eyes with a strong hold and frigid winds. Damnation. Despair. He was the iron law that bent darkness to his will.

Katsuki had been wondering if Vongola Ninth and Reborn planned this from the beginning. Tsunayoshi and his guardians were too young and they were born and raised as civilians. They wouldn't have what it took to stand on their own in the mafia world without help. And no, there was no way that Vongola would want CEDEF to be meddling with Decimo's decisions too much, not even if the head of CEDEF was Decimo's father. Xanxus and Varia could fill that hole for them, making sure the other mafia families stayed in line until the Tenth generation matured through fear and intimidation.

Two sides of the same coin named Vongola. The whip and the candy. Kept the family strong.

And Xanxus wouldn't say no because it was for *Vongola.*

If he really did plan this, all Katsuki could say was that Vongola Ninth was a true boss before he was a father.

"I'm not babysitting anymore kids today," he said as he leaned his head on Xanxus's shoulder. "You're already a handful but all of you really are shit at parenting."

"We're the mafia, what else do you expect? Didn't leave her out for the wolves to collect and didn't send her off to a boarding school or made her take extracurriculars, that's already better than what I got when I first started." Xanxus sneered at him. It was true, Xanxus started with more than two languages to learn and everything else that a mafia boss would need to know. Table manners, how to read a room, connections and names to put to faces and weaponry along with the other normal stuff like math and sciences. "Besides, you turned out…alright."

"I don't count, dumbass."

"You're still one of mine."

"And she's not?"

"She's pathetic."

"She's *six.* I think."

"Squalo was wielding swords against adults and Bel almost killed his brother three times already at her age. I stuck a knife into some drunk fool's kidney. And you," Xanxus paused, turning his eyes to Katsuki for a moment, "were stupid enough to follow a random teenager with a gun around his belt around."

"Probably not the smartest choice I ever made."

Xanxus draped his arm over Katsuki's shoulders. His eyes were half closed but the scars on him haven't faded yet.

"I was going to go see my mom," Xanxus said disinterestedly. "Found out where the old man moved her. Bitch is still alive apparently. Too far gone to recognize anybody but still breathing, ain't that funny?"

He slurred the rest of it in Sicilian and Katsuki just listened to the rant about her good and bad days.

Katsuki didn't have a lot of pleasant memories of his mother. There were good parts of course but time made those memories fade away. It was always her back, the sound of heels moving around in the night and luggages, sprinkled in with some shouting of course. Fabrics and models, along with a proud smile that was never meant for Katsuki. Sometimes things got physical but Katsuki hadn't bothered to pull on his Victoire persona for his parents.

Victoire was for himself. For Mammon and for Xanxus.

Not his parents. Not the Bakugous' perfect *son*.

Katsuki didn't ask if Xanxus wanted him to visit his mother with him. The man would take him if he thought Katsuki should come. He played with the beads and feathers in Xanxus's hair, feeling their bodies pressed close together and it was warm. Inhaling slowly, he could feel the alcohol in the air forcing its way down the membranes lining his throat.

They were too similar. Mothers with their good and bad days. A father that was more of a shadow on the wall and superficial smiles. The lies of a blood bond or how everything would be alright (be *better*) if they just stop being themselves. Neglect, jealousy, the drive for perfection and ambition that burned so hot that it seemed to melt their bones… Katsuki had to remind himself that Xanxus didn't love him.

He didn't really love Xanxus either.

This was never about love.

They had been harmonizing unconsciously and the properties of the cloud flames inside Katsuki amplified the feeling of fondness. That was the pull he felt whenever he looked at Xanxus. They were too in sync to tell the difference between an attraction and a bond.

Stupid fools. Now that Katsuki had his memories from the future, he had a better grasp of the concept of flames and he could peel that away now, revealing the truth. The gravitational pull that was there before wasn't as strong and his feelings for Xanxus wasn't as crystal clear as he felt like it should be anymore. It was not love that made them soulmates, it was just some stupid flames doing its weird flame thingy.

The future had been changed. The inheritance ceremony in their memories didn't happen now and it wasn't in Japan.

Their future wasn't guaranteed.

"This is such a bad time for it but I need to ask you something," Katsuki looked up, seeing a hint of realization in Xanxus's eyes. Of course, if even the blond realized what was going on, there was no way Xanxus didn't see it coming either. "Are we still going to keep doing…whatever *this* is?"

Lovers? Victoire was Xanxus's lover. Katsuki was just the hero kid.

Fuck buddies? But it wasn't all about the sex for them either.

Maybe he was making this too complicated for his own good. What if Xanxus wanted to break it off or carve a clear boundary now that he knew his feelings were being controlled by some flames and weird sky and guardian bond?

Xanxus set the bottle down.

"Nothing's changed," he said while piercing Katsuki with his gaze. "You're still a fucking brat and my bitch."

That might have been the closest thing to I love you that Xanxus had ever said to him.

He tried not to laugh when the Varia boss shot him a dirty glare. If he dared to make a comment, Katsuki would probably get tossed out the window for real. Katsuki straddled Xanxus's lap.

"You kept her safe." He brushed a loose strand of hair out of Xanxus's face. The image of his lover's future self superimposed upon his current one in the blond teen's mind. "Thank you."

"Don't know what you're talking about."

"Come on, don't act tough. She is…*will* be your kid too!" Katsuki whined slightly but his fingers were gentle as he traced the edge of Xanxus's eyes. "She has your eyes and flames when she gets mad. She's going to be ruthless and wicked when she grows up."

"She's a crying bundle of menace that's even worse to deal with than the brat with the horn on her forehead."

"But she's ours."

Katsuki smiled. His next words were lost in the kiss as hands sneaked under his dress. He wasn't drunk or happy enough that his brain forgot that he had placed Xanxus on a sabbatical from sex though but today was an exception.

He reached for the bag Lussuria got him as fingers pushed the thin band of fabric of his thong aside and shoved into his hole. They worked his already wet and well lubed rim of muscles looser.

"Use this if we're going to fuck." He pushed a pack of condoms against Xanxus's chest. Xanxus tossed it to the floor without even bothering to spare it a glance.

"This stuff is redundant now. That's not how we did it."

"So you *do* know how we got Matilde!" Katsuki yelled, suddenly forgetting even to struggle as he got pinned down on the sofa. "And you lied to me on the phone about it?"

Xanxus responded by pushing himself into Katsuki and the blond screamed. Xanxus was already moving, not giving him time to adjust to being stretched open on the thick girth. It felt like it was filling him up to the brim and Katsuki's breath hitched in the back of his throat.

"T-This is not fair! Fuck! Xan-Xaxnus!"

He clawed at the man's scarred arms but the cock only pushed into him further and the thrusts were rough, aiming straight for his prostate that his legs spasmed uselessly after being slammed into his weak spot.

"I can't believe you! You're such a bast—"

His mouth was claimed in a hungry kiss like he was going to be devoured. Saliva drooled down his chin as teeth grinded against his tongue, almost as if it was going to chomp down on him. A hand was on his butt, squeezing and fondling with his flesh like it was dough.

"Wait…Please, ugh! I c-can't—"

He might have prepared but he wasn't fully ready for Xanxus yet. Not this rough or fast. But the man on top of him was fully aroused and excited, not caring about anything else other than the sensation of a tight and hot hole clenching down around his giant cock. Katsuki whimpered in pain when the bites came down around the junction of his shoulder and neck. The assassin had always been wild and

aggressive, even more so when he was actively avoiding answering Katsuki's accusations.

Katsuki's nails left thin red lines along the scars on Xanxus's back. His tears rolled down his face and his toes curled as he got surrounded by the familiar musky scent and the heat. The muscles on top of him were firm, sculpted and trained for the most efficient kill. Through the haze, Katsuki could see the desire swirling in those scarlet eyes.

This was madness. Anger, frustration, embarrassment, confusion…all of their emotions were mixed together into one storm that was tearing through Katsuki's body.

"Slow down…" He trembled as he tried to relax and take in all of Xanxus without hurting himself. It was hard, he felt like his insides were getting twisted and all messed up but the ecstasy shot up his spine and made his mind beg for more.

A hand cupped his chin and another held his hip, it was going to bruise later. Body fluids dripped down his thigh and pooled on the ground, making where they connected a sticky and sloppy mess. Katsuki was on all fours on the bed now. He hadn't realized when they moved or changed positions.

Xanxus fucked him into the sheets while he cried.

He tried to crawl away when the pleasure and pain became too much, when his brain couldn't distinguish between the two any longer and he fell into the pillows.

And then he got dragged back harshly in one swift movement.

The cock impaled him, spearing through his hole and slammed into a spot that was *too deep*. It sped up, prolonging the intense torture as Katsuki got violated over and over again. He cummed and climaxed, squirted like a girl when the tattered fabric of his dress got fully ripped off. He might have gotten turned over because teeth grinded against his swollen nipples but the pace of the dick thrusting inside of him didn't slow down.

He could hear the low grunts and quiet rumbles of pleasure from the back of Xanxus's throat as the pounding continued. Xanxus wasn't much of a talker even when they do it. He was more biting and kisses kind of guy. Sweat made his scars glisten and his eyes were the same shade of intense red that Katsuki loved. So he wrapped his legs around Xanxus's waist and allowed the man to use him as much as he wanted.

Katsuki was sure his ass was going to hurt like hell and it would be hard to do anything tomorrow. *If* Xanxus was even willing to let him off the bed tomorrow. That was why he requested a three days break from school.

The last thought that made it to his head before he got carried into the bathroom for round two was a simple one.

Sawada Tsunayoshi was going to pay for this.

Chapter End Notes

> They fucked. Not the healthiest coping mechanism but hey, it kind of works? Anyways, the inheritance ceremony happened like in canon.
>
> Comments are motivating and I love you all for reading!

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

The inheritance ceremony was a mess.

Katsuki heard about it later from Tsunayoshi during a video call. The brown haired teen looked pretty banged up and so did his friends (Gokudera surprisingly didn't make any jabs at Katsuki). Another mafia family crashed the ceremony, took Vongola's Sin, which was a vial of blood passed down from generation to generation, a reminder of the family's sinful past. As it turned out, there had been a huge misunderstanding caused by one meddling man between Vongola and this other family.

Vongola Primo's mist guardian, some guy named Spade, was still alive. He was a powerful illusionist like Mammon and Mukuro. This man possessed people and changed bodies whenever it got old, which was how his consciousness survived for this long.

Katsuki wouldn't say that Spade didn't love Vongola. No, in fact, this man was probably the most devoted to the organization. Spade took over other people's bodies so he could ensure Vongola stayed strong every generation, that it was feared and respected across the globe.

For the glory of Vongola.

For the woman he loved.

There was a love story behind it. A noble woman who had helped Vongola's first generation when they were still a small vigilante group. Spade loved her dearly but she died because of her association with Vongola. Spade didn't blame his friends and Boss. He blamed the true villains, the other mafia families who were so hungry for power and position that they would drag women and children into the blood feuds.

To avoid that from ever happening again, Spade supported Vongola Secondo's ruthless style of rule, helped forge Vongola with blood and thorns, and built an empire on countless white bones. Vongola must be ruled by the strong. It must be the strongest in the world so no one

would dare defy and touch what was theirs again.

Vongola Primo had a trusted friend, the boss of the Simon family at that time, who opposed this method of fear and violence. Spade got rid of his family under the ruse of Primo's orders and that was the reason for Tsunayoshi's battle with the Simons. The Simons might not be a big shot right now but they had earth flames that opposed the Vongola's flames. It was a hard battle of betrayal, displacing blames, reconciliation, and discovering the past. Even the *Vindice* had to get involved.

Things were always bad when the Vindice had to get involved. They weren't called avengers for no reason and it had absolutely nothing to do with the old time comic book heroes.

Eventually, Tsunayoshi and his friends defeated the Simons and together, they took down Spade.

"Mukuro is out," Tsunayoshi said to Katsuki. "He helped us in the battle against Spade and the Vindice has decided to release him from their water prison."

"Hibari is going to duel him isn't he?" Katsuki could already see the carnivore with his tonfas heading straight for Mukuro once the latter got enough strength to stand.

Tsunayoshi only smiled sheepishly and then he turned the phone around.

"Almost forgot, this is Kozato Enma. We didn't get to talk a lot during the field trip to UA." Tsunayoshi brought the red haired boy closer to the camera. Kozato's face was covered in bandages too. "He's the tenth boss of the Simon famigila and he's staying the night."

"Hello," the boy said softly. He didn't look like someone who had planned to kill his friend earlier this week. Well, Spade was manipulating him back then so without the illusionist whispering evil into his ears, he looked much more cheerful. Still looked like a soft hearted loser though. "Tsuna…is it alright for us to be telling a hero student about the family stuff?"

"It's alright, Bakugou-kun knows. Like I told you before, he's associated with Vongola too."

Kozato blinked and then realization filled his eyes. "Wait! Are you serious? Shitt P! is right about him and Victoire? I thought she was

kidding."

Shitt P! was one of Kozato's guardians. She was an eccentric girl with a shaved head and lots of glamorous makeup. Although she acted strangely, she was intelligent, able to match Gokudera in school work and observational skills. Katsuki thought that she was kind of like an alien so if it was her that placed two and two together, he wasn't too surprised.

"He *is* Victoire," Tsunayoshi confirmed when he saw that Katsuki didn't react.

Kozato's mouth hung open.

"Julie and the others are going to be so crushed if they find out." His other family members weren't big on celebrities but one of the guys, Julie, was a player and certainly loved all cute girls. Kozato eyed Katsuki and complimented, "You make it look reallly natural."

"Katsuki is very good at it." Tsunayoshi smiled. "Is Xanxus alright? Squalo said he was in Japan too but he was a no show for the ceremony, not that I have a problem with it though."

Katsuki yawned as he leaned back into the headboard of the hotel's large bed. It was the third day and he really should be getting back to UA. His skin underneath his clothing was littered with bruises and love marks, which he had the modesty to cover up before he started talking to Tsunayoshi."He's Xanxus, what do you think?"

Tsunayoshi made a knowing sound that sounded more like a squeal immediately.

The sound of water in the bathroom stopped. Katsuki sighed. "I have to go."

He turned his phone off and got off the bed. The action pulled on his still sore muscles but he powered through it. His stupid boyfriend really didn't know how to hold back.

"The big trash has a car for you downstairs." In a few minutes, Xanxus came out half dressed. Katsuki watched him throw on a new shirt and draped a tie over his neck lazily. His scars had mostly faded and his mood seemed to be more alleviated.

Katsuki smoothed out the wrinkles on his dress. The white one he came in with had been destroyed and someone got him a new stuff to

wear. The high collared white blouse made of silk hid the marks around his neck and the red skirt flowed down to his knees. He was also wearing black stocking underneath so it could hide the bruises on his legs. A ribbon was around his neck and he stepped into the red round toed heels. Xanxus didn't pull on Katsuki's hair extension so he still looked more Victoire than Katsuki.

The blond pulled Xanxus closer by his tie and they shared a kiss. It was light and uncharacteristically tender for both of them. Katsuki released him and they stepped out of the room together. Squalo was in the commons polishing his sword.

"Finally done? You missed quite a lot, Boss." He gave them a wide but crooked grin. "Euclide will drive you."

Xanxus went to the table for the food and Katsuki nodded at the swordsman. He headed out the door and sure enough, the Varia assassin was waiting by a parked car. The man opened the door for them and they drove in silence.

They weren't going straight to his house.

Katsuki needed to get back on his own and change then return to his parents' house. He would get back to UA from there and purposefully let himself be caught on the street surveillance cameras so everything looked legit. He was home. He went back to school from his home.

The car suddenly stopped and Euclide glanced at Katsuki from the rearview mirror. A slight frown on his lips. "Lady Victoire, it's the Ninth's guardians."

Katsuki looked out the window, another black car had stopped in front of them and the middle aged man that came out of the passenger seat was indeed one of Vongonla Ninth's.

His fist curled tightly on his lap.

The man in the suit knocked lightly on Katsuki's window and the teen rolled it down. He didn't have much of a smile. If Katsuki remembered correctly, this was the Ninth genneration's lightning guardian.

"Vongola Ninth would like to see you."

Euclide got out of the car. "This is not appropriate and very impolite. Please contact Captain Squalo or Boss before you approach Lady Victoire with such an invitation."

Katsuki would have to commend that loyalty but it wasn't time for it right now. "Euclide, stand down."

The man was surprised to hear his name called. "But Boss—"

"It's fine." He unlocked the door and Vongola Ninth's guardian was enough of a gentleman to open it fully for him. The older man even extended a hand out to help him out of the car. Katsuki took it without showing any emotions. He kind of expected this when he saw Vongola Nono sending him gifts. "They aren't going to kill us in broad daylight."

That made the man's lips curl slightly while Euclide frowned.

"Watch your steps, young lady." He knew. Katsuki could tell from his tone that he wanted him to know they knew, especially when the man stressed the *lady* part.

He switched into a different car and was taken to another hotel closer to his place. Vongola had more than enough time to do their homework it seemed. Katsuki didn't care much for the wide room with all its lavish decorations. He could only keep his head high as he studied the old man waiting for him.

Vongola Ninth carried a scepter. He was neatly pressed in a sharp polished suit and although his hair and mustaches were fully white, the light in his eyes still burned brightly. Tsunayoshi might consider the old man as a grandfatherly figure and the Ninth was more than happy to present himself as such in front of him, but that wasn't the case with Katsuki.

He was Vongola. The head of Vongola. The boss of the strongest mafia family in the world and the crownless emperor of the underground society.

"Welcome," Vongola Ninth said. "I suppose introductions are not required. Please, have a seat. There are a few things I would like to speak with you about."

—---

They were in discussions about killing his son.

"We all knew he was trouble to begin with," Coyote sighed, clearly tired to the bones. In truth, so was Timoteo and everyone else in the room. His storm guardian wiped his own face with one hand but was

unable to remove the deep creases on his aging features. “He turned on the family that took him in.”

“Boss, I know you still think of him as your son but if a dog went rabid, you have to put it down.” Visconti, Timoteo’s cloud guardian, also shook his head.

“He’s my son and not an animal.” The iron on Timoteo’s face seemed to have ingrained itself into his skin like an impenetrable mask but the old mafia Don’s shoulders were sagged lower than normal. He had just ended a battle with his youngest child, who turned his destructive flames on his family and came for Timoteo’s head.

His son was now encased in a block of ice in the basement, sealed off with chains and thick metal.

“He’s worse than an animal. Even animals would know not to bite the hand that fed them.”

“Ganauche.” Timoteo’s voice came out colder and harsher than he intended and his lightning guardian lowered his head.

It was the aftermath of a coup and Timoteo was tired. He was exasperated dealing with the family matters and external affairs because the other families would surely hear of this event, no matter how much they tried to contain the news. The heroes would too and it was only a matter of time before more work piled up on everybody’s desks. He didn’t even have time to properly analyze where everything had gone wrong. Why would his child be pushed to point a gun at his head?

However, deep down, maybe he did know. He had just been a coward and prayed that the lies wouldn’t catch up with him. Yet they inevitably did and now his family paid the price for his mistake. Blood was spilled unnecessarily and the pain growing inside his chest was even harder to endure than any physical bullet wounds.

Maybe there was one thing his son had gotten right and it was that Timoteo had gotten soft. He couldn’t bring himself to order for Xanxus’s execution even if the boy tried to overthrow him.

They sealed Xanxus away and announced that he had been sent away to solitary confinement. Varia was put under suspension for the time being with reduced work but they were still kept around. Vongola needed Varia and the men and women in there were *quality*. Skilled elites that would be hard to replace.

The next time Xanxus's name came up in a meeting with all of his guardians was after the death of all three of Timoteo's biological sons. His boys. His pride and joy were all gone, reuniting with their mother high in the heavens (or maybe down in the depth of the earth considering their bloody profession) way too soon.

The Vongola was almost out of heirs.

Timoteo sat in a grim circle around the meeting room table with his guardians and Iemitsu, the CEDEF's head. The silence in the air was oppressively heavy as Timoteo sat at the head of the table with his head down and expression blank.

He buried another of his children today. It had been a long eight years.

"The Rossi women," Nie Brow Jr, Timoteo's current Sun, spoke up. "Nobilities. They are very fertile too."

"No," Timoteo rejected the idea in an instant. "I will not be fathering another child into this world."

They didn't have the luxury of time to raise another heir for eighteen years either.

"The De Lucas are distant but they have a boy. Sixteen right now."

"Their blood is too thin," Coyote said grimly. "And sixteen is too old to reshape loyalties. I guarantee you that within a decade, Vongola will be no more and only De Lucas will remain."

"The Caseros have a pair of twins around ten years old I believe." The Ninth generation's mist, Croquant, suggested slowly. "A boy and a girl, both have good reputations and their mother is recently deceased. Cancer."

The bickering and arguments went on like a train stuck in a never ending loop. For a family with such a long history like theirs, there were side branches of the Vongola family tree of course but a sky was rare. And to be Decimo, the scion needed the blood, the will, and the flames.

"There is one more legitimate candidate. Thirteen years old with a good heart." Timoteo was choosing his words very carefully as all eyes landed on him. "Primo's line."

Iemitsu was on his feet and his chair screeched. Timoteo was sure even the man himself was unaware that he had stood up. “He can’t,” Iemitsu said, almost breathless even. “He’s clumsy and timid and…too soft. My son can’t rule Vongola.”

“But he has the flames and the blood.”

And that was what the other candidates were lacking.

“Iemitsu’s boy…he’s a civilian isn’t he?” Coyote asked. “We can’t thrust him into this world as he is. He’d die off before he even got a chance to hold the ring.”

Timoteo didn’t falter. “A tutor then. I shall send word to Reborn.”

There was a round of low murmurs around the table. If there was anyone who could train a proper heir and keep that heir alive, it was the world’s greatest hitman.

“Any other arrangements you would like for us to put together, Iemitsu?” Timoteo asked softly but there was still iron behind his words. His tone was gentle but the meaning behind his question wasn’t.

“…No, sir.” Iemitsu sat back down, hiding his trembling fingers on his lap when he noticed a few of the guardians reaching for their weapons. “As you wish, Tsunayoshi will serve Vongola in its time of need.”

“He’s thirteen already…would a catalyst be needed to propel him towards the right direction?”

Timoteo pretended that he didn’t see the snide glare between his rain and Iemitsu. “I believe that can be arranged as well.”

He scanned the men in the room, people that he would entrust with his life.

“Xanxus.”

The air stilled, like the particles and atoms were frozen then the protest erupted in the whole room.

“He tried to kill you!” His mist slammed a fist on the table.

“I object as well.” His sun was calmer but the shaking undertone gave him away. “What’s to say he won’t try another coup? He nearly

succeeded last time. He's unstable and I won't stand for a Decimo like him."

"He's an arrogant and self centered boy with too much fury. He'd burn Vongola to the ground."

Timoteo waited until everyone had a chance to express how terrible of an idea this was.

"He's not legitimate," murmured Coyote with a hint of pain behind his voice. "Varia suited his skills and temperament but he would never be satisfied with that alone."

"But blood or not, he is still Vongola." Timoteo would have smiled but he couldn't find the strength for it today. "We need strength in the next generation and it is not likely we will find it in young Tsunayoshi in the short term."

And that vacancy, that sign of *weakness* would be fatal for Vongola. Villains of all sorts would try to take advantage and seize a chance. It would cause instability in their society.

"But it's *Xanxus,*" Iemitsu almost growled but he was also grimacing. "Are you planning to make my boy face off Xanxus? He'd tear Tsunayoshi to shreds!"

"I will talk to him."

"Like *that* did so much good last time?"

The guardians got restless and the shift of tension in the air thickened. Timoteo held up a hand to calm things.

"I *will* talk to him," Timoteo said, voice hard with steel in his eyes. He didn't want to use this tone with his men but they knew his decision was final when the last syllable left his lips. "Xanxus is my child, even without the blood."

Timoteo had four sons in his long life up till now. He lost three already, he would not lose his fourth.

But family reunions were hard.

Even after years, Vongola's ice was still thick and frigid, making the air around it drop a few degrees. Thawing Xanxus out of the ice was not as hard as they anticipated. The flames from the rings did their job

just fine.

Timoteo still remembered how Xanxus had looked before he was frozen. The rage and defiance on his face twisted his features but other than that…it was hurt. Betrayal. The feeling that Timoteo had learned and saw on his own face countless times in the mirror throughout his long career as Don Vongola.

Xanxus staggered like a drunken man and his knees hit the ground heavily. He caught himself with one hand, shivering and coughing violently. Age didn't leave a mark on him but Timoteo's ice did. The scars burned into his skin, forming large ugly patches.

Timoteo remembered Xanxus growing up. How the boy was a pupil any teacher would be proud of. His mother might be out of her mind but the boy was the sharpest tool in the box. A competent shot with endless potential and he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Timoteo at fourteen. Xanxus was going to be a large one, towering over the average men easily even before he was of age.

His guardians seized his son, who came freshly out of his icy slumber and was still gathering his bearings. They hauled him up, folded his arms behind his back and slapped a pair of rain flames infused reinforced cuffs on him. Xanxus looked up and snarled at them all, baring his teeth like a real wild animal that was injured. Timoteo wasn't sure if the boy was even fully aware who they were or where he was.

He was supposed to be twenty three this year.

"Get him medical attention," Timoteo ordered, face blank and voice unfaltering. "...See if you can do anything about his scars. Let Varia see him if they want to."

And then he turned to leave.

It was another few months before Timoteo met his last surviving child again. Xanxus was back on his feet but the scars remained. It made it hard for Timoteo to look at his son straight in the face for long.

They were in a small meeting room. Timoteo's guardians arranged themselves around the room so that if Xanxus even made one funny move, he would be pinned down immediately.

"Your brothers are dead," Timoteo said after a long moment of silence.

Xanxus didn't yell profanities at him. The boy, maybe Timoteo couldn't call him a boy any more, stared at him with a scowl on his face. "Sucks to be you then. I told you before those three farts were incompetent."

"They were your brothers."

"They're not my brothers."

"Adopted brothers are still brothers."

"They seem to think otherwise."

Sighing, Timoteo placed a hand on the table. "It has been eight years."

"What?"

"It has been eight years since you have been frozen."

Xanxus bared his teeth, forming an almost sinister smile. "So I've heard. You bastards want to rub it in my face?"

It was nice to see that his child hadn't lost his spirit but Timoteo couldn't help but worry. The rage was still in the line of Xanxus's face, simmering and still burning hot. The rage exploded when Timoteo laid out the offer he had for Xanxus.

"FUCK YOU!" he howled at Timoteo as he launched himself across the table. He didn't get far, Timoteo's guardians caught him and wrestled him down. There was yelling. Lots of yelling. Xanxus strained against his restraints. Some glass was shattered as his son was pinned down on the table. "Bastard! Fucking damn old fart! You lied to me! You sealed me away and you think—You think—You *lied.* I was never your son! Now you're at your wits end and suddenly I'm worth something again? You think I'm just going to lie down and roll over, pave the way for some shitty kid with the *right* blood in his veins?"

Xanxus screamed, continued cursing and screaming until his voice turned into hoarse gasps. The men behind him pulled him back into his seat and secured him there. A dagger pressed against his throat and a gun at his temple.

The young man's chest was heaving but he didn't show any fear. It was still rage, pure rage that consumed him whole.

"Careful boy," Coyote warned in a low voice. "This is your only

chance."

"It is for the family," Timoteo said slowly but surely. "For the legacy of Vongola. Blood or not, I have always considered you as my son."

"I am not your son," he spat back. "You're not my father. You used me and still want to use me because I've got a flame that could be a threat. You gave me to the tutors and the maids to raise and that picture perfect family in your head is bullshit! Enrico and the other two dimwits would have killed each other for the throne in a heartbeat. You expect them to just accept another competition with smiles on their faces? No one would have accepted a whore's son from the streets if he wasn't better than anyone else! I don't know what you think you can get for releasing me but unhand me and give me a gun if you can't end me yourself. I lost. I'll pay the fucking price like a real man, not like you cowards."

"I do not wish you dead." Timoteo wasn't sure how things got to this point but he was tired of it. Maybe he really was getting too old. "If not for yourself, consider this offer for your men. Squalo was it? He had been waiting for your return."

Xanxus turned quiet at that point. The scars decorated his face as he clenched his jaw tight.

"We could have put a bullet in all of their heads too but we didn't. This is mercy, my boy. You might not want it but I will not allow you to weaken our family. The Varia is vital to Vongola, especially now with our enemies and the heroes pressing us hard. *You* will continue to lead it for our family."

Their relationship hadn't softened but it was a start. His son was alive and breathing, doing work for the family to ensure Vongola stayed at the top. Timoteo caught wind of things of course, his guardians had ushered him into keeping a tighter watch on Xanxus and Varia in case of another upstart.

Xanxus found a little companionship in a pretty creature that took to the spotlights. She looked like a nice girl, someone who was a foil to his son's aggressive temper. Timoteo might not understand his son as well as he had thought but he was still his father.

Timoteo was old and he had no intention of manipulating Xanxus's marriage for the gain of the family. It was probably better that he didn't anyways. If Xanxus had married the daughter of another prominent family, then the delicate balance of power they had right

now might be tipped again. They didn't know Xanxus was adopted. Timoteo would like to contain that fact within the inner circles of Vongola's higher ups only.

So he let it be.

He hoped his son would find some happiness that could sooth out his rage. A model was fine. No harm there.

A *hero* on the other hand, was a concern.

The file that made it to his desk after Tsunayoshi had been kidnapped by Japanese villains contained some…interesting information. Timoteo wasn't sure how to feel about it. The model was a boy and a possible cloud, who aspired to be a hero.

His son allowed it.

But the hero was a good child. Hot tempered like Xanxus but still had a good heart that was on the right side of the law. He became friends with Tsunayoshi, which must have been Reborn's work. It was a splendid move.

Timoteo had a dream, a dream about Vongola's future and how Sawada Tsunayoshi was as Decimo. A bunch of teenagers fighting a battle for the sake of multiple worlds. He saw his son in the dream too. More mature but that fire never quite fully drenched out. He had a family of his own, fathered a daughter with the hero.

The thought of a granddaughter made Timoteo smile in the privacy of his studies.

And now he was staring at Bakugou Katsuki right in front of him.

The boy was younger than he appeared in Timoteo's dream, which wasn't surprising. He still looked lovely dressed as the other gender, poised and proper like any other lady from a fine household. Xanxus treated him well, that much was obvious. Timoteo hadn't seen it last time they met but now he could, there was a fire in this child too, hidden behind the lace and glossy cosmetics.

He was proud just like Xanxus.

"I should thank you for taking care of Xanxus," Timoteo started. His guardians stood around the room because as much as they knew Bakugou Katsuki was a hero in training, it would never hurt to be

careful in their profession. “He can be…hard to deal with at times.”

“He’s my boyfriend, I’m not going to ditch him.” Those red eyes resembled his son’s very much. Suspicion and indifference hid away all the uncertainties.

“I am happy to hear that.” Timoteo offered the teen tea but he didn’t take any. “I heard you returned all my gifts to Tsunayoshi’s house.”

“I don’t need your gifts,” he answered. “Xanxus doesn’t want them either.”

“Perhaps that is true.” He could certainly imagine his son blasting anything he sent (besides missions of course) to ashes. “But there is one gift I would like to give you in person, one that I hope you will accept.”

Bakugou Katsuki watched him as he took out a small black box.

“This,” Timoteo whispered as he caressed the edge of the box, “used to belong to my wife. She used to say that she would pass it down to the next person who will support our son through thick and thin, like she did for me. It was going to go to Enrico’s fiance but, I think you know the rest.”

He pushed the opened box closer to Katsuki. There was a beautiful ring inside. It had a band of gold and the diamond shined brilliantly, smaller pieces of sapphire formed petal like patterns around the large diamond.

Timoteo smiled at the blond teen.

Bakugou Katsuki picked up the box, studying it for a brief moment before closing it and placing it back on the table. “I don’t know why you are handing me this.”

“You are the one my legacy has chosen.”

“That’s your wife’s ring. A mafia boss’s wife’s ring.” The ghost of a smile made it to the blond’s lips. “But Xanxus isn’t the one you chose as heir. I can’t take that. I am not supposed to take that and I *won’t* take that. Xanxus and Tsunayoshi are both your legacies, don’t play word games with me. I’m not that gullible.”

Timoteo leaned back into his seat. “So you know.”

“Don’t act so surprised, Don Vongola. My real name is Bakugou Katsuki,” he said calmly, his spine never wavering even a bit even if he was in a room full of the high echelons of the mafia world. “But I guess you already know that too.”

Vongola Ninth arched an eyebrow, finally satisfied. Of course he had heard of the rumors. A model aiming to be the Decimo’s wife. While he did wish for the relationship between Tsunayoshi’s tenth generation and Xanxus’s Varia to be better, he was wary of the possible…troubles. Victoire and Bakugou Katsuki were one and the same. He was close with both sides and his loyalty to the family was questionable since he was an outsider. Raised outside of Vongola’s circles and aiming to be a hero.

Not exactly the most trustworthy candidate.

“You’re a smart lad. I should thank you for saving Tsunayoshi from the villains.” He didn’t observe greed on this boy when he showed him the ring. Bakugou seemed like he knew his place and was smart enough to navigate the murky politics.

“He was my responsibility.” The teen turned his head away, voice lower and closer to his normal speaking tone. “Can’t let him die there. Would have been bad for UA and the heroes too.”

“You are a kind child.”

That made Bakugou Katsuki snap his head back at Timoteo, red eyes burning into his. “I am not going to work against Xanxus for you or Tsunayoshi. I will not kill Tsunayoshi for Xanxus either if that is what you are getting to.”

“I will ask you to do no such thing.”

“Really? Cause it really doesn’t feel that way.” The boy gestured to the guardians around the room, each more than ready to put a bullet through his head if he made one wrong comment.

“They are concerned about me and the future of our family.”

“And you all would do anything for Vongola.”

“There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for this family,” Timoteo echoed without any shame. He knew his duties even before he took the title from his mother. “But I am also a father and I worry for my son. Xanxus loves you and I do not wish to see him hurt.”

He had suffered enough betrayals.

The blond teen's face fell and the careful facade he wore cracked just enough for Timoteo to see something darker swirling underneath. Still too young, this one. But they had time to fix that.

The next thing that Bakugou Katsuki said however, did make Timoteo give him a questioning look. His guardians did too.

"You got it all wrong. Xanxus doesn't love me," the boy said. It was more of a sigh than anything else. The syllables rolled off his tongue easily. An accepted fact without bitterness or resentment. "He loves *Vongola,* not me."

"...He cares for you," Timoteo managed but he could see no storm brewing in the boy's eyes. Bakugou Katsuki met him with a clean gaze, free of heartbreaks or any sort of pain.

"That is not love."

"Do you love him then?"

It took him a lot longer to reply this time. "No, I don't love him either."

That answer dissipated into the thick air in the room.

"Then why do you stay with him?" For power? For wealth or connections? Timoteo casted his eyes down to the ring box on the table.

"I don't love him, not in the sense that people believed love should be like anyways. I won't betray my beliefs for him just like he won't pick me if the choices come down to Vongola and me."

That was a good answer. Smart child. Maybe too smart and clear headed for his own good. Timoteo sighed. If this boy had been born a girl, he would have made the perfect Decimo's wife.

"Even if you don't believe me, I am glad he chose you." Timoteo took the ring box back and his shoulders relaxed some more. "My apologies for the sudden invitation, it's a bad habit that came with the profession."

"It is not me that you should be apologizing to or telling your reasons to." His eyes were still cold, too cold for a hero. "Blood. Pride. Sin.

Xanxus was only let out of the ice because you had no other choice. Because *you* ran out of options. How do you think he felt about that? The past doesn't go away and I am not your messenger or bridge to fix something broken."

Timoteo's Sun placed a firm hand on the boy's shoulder. "You are talking to the Ninth boss of Vongola."

"It is alright." Timoteo shook his head. He would rather the teen be angry with him for Xanxus than to find out he was a mole planted by the heroes. This child cared for his son and love or not, that was enough for him. It gave him closure to know there would be someone willing to stand by his child to the very end, someone who wouldn't be afraid of Xanxus's temper and was strong enough to last. "He is right. I had made terrible mistakes."

There was commotion from outside the door and Timoteo looked up. Xanxus stormed in with his guns in hand, looking like he was ready for another coup d'etat. The Vaira member downstairs they took with Bakugou Katsuki must have found a way to contact his commanders. Quality. Really, this was why Varia was so essential to Vongola. The guardians drew their weapons too but Timoteo ordered them to stand down.

Suddenly Xanxus looked fourteen again. The angry boy with lots of rebellious spite that drove the servants and his tutor mad. He used to kick the door in with that displeased look on his face whenever Timoteo called him into his studies for a lecture.

He really was getting old.

"Old man," Xanxus hissed as he shoved Bakugou Katsuki behind him. "What's the meaning of this?"

"It was just a talk."

"Behind *my* back? Have you gone senile?"

"You wouldn't have agreed." Vongola Ninth stood up and straightened his shoulders. The end of his scepter tapped along the floor as he approached his son. "We were just talking about you. I know you are going to say that we've been through this before but even without the blood, I have always considered you as my own in every way that mattered. I thought you would understand that as well. I only ever wished to provide for you the things you have been denied in the slums and I had no intention of lying to you…but I guess you do not

share the same belief. It was my mistake to have misled you. I am sorry, my son."

"Apologies are cheap," Xanxus rasped, voice dangerously close to the edge of another one of his episodes that everyone in the room was familiar with.

"Yes," Timoteo agreed. "But they are the first steps towards righting a wrong."

Xanxus kicked the glass coffee table over and it shattered. The loud sound crashed dangerously on everybody's sensitive nerves. There was heat and light gathering inside Xanxus's guns. The heat flared and the gleam of light brightened the already well lit room.

"You don't start an apology by doing whatever the hell you want behind my back, with my brat."

Timoteo opened his arms and he hugged his raging child, surprising everyone else in the room. Even the Flame of Wrath seemed to dim as Xanxus stood stunned in the embrace.

"These past few years have been hard on everybody in the family. You are my son and I love you, Xanxus. Nothing you do will ever change that. I couldn't understand you but I am happy someone else can and I know he *can* for sure after talking to him."

Timoteo let go, watched as his son met his eyes and the countless levels of emotions shifted on his scarred face.

"Xanxus," Bakugou Katsuki called and his voice rang clear, breaking the spell that froze everyone in place. Xanxus shoved his guns into his hoisters and turned on his heels sharply, grabbing the younger boy by the wrist.

"We're leaving," he announced loudly, voice brimming with anger but also a mix of other darker feelings that seemed to make his shoulders quivered ever so slightly, like how he had been when he first exited the ice. It looked like he thought his boyfriend was walking too slow and he hauled the kid over his shoulder, never once looking back, not even as he flipped Timoteo and the rest of the guardians off with his free hand. "And fuck you, stupid old man. Where I put my dick is none of your concern! I don't need your approval!"

Timoteo's guardians coughed and a few sounded like they were about to choke upon hearing his statement.

“Xanxus!” Bakugou Katsuki’s face was burning red as he slammed his fists into Xanxus’s back but that didn’t bother the Vaira boss. Very soon, they were out of sight.

“Should we…go after them?” His cloud asked while trying to hide a bit of a smile behind his fist.

“No, it’s alright. Let them leave and have someone clean this up.” Timoteo gestured towards the broken glass on the ground.

“It feels like we’re still dealing with a teenager,” Coyote sighed. “I’m starting to think this teenage rebellious phase is never going to end.”

“Two teenagers,” the lightning guardian corrected easily. “And a band of equally crazy assassins at their disposal.”

Timoteo walked towards the window and saw his son shoving the blond into a car downstairs.

His son had a frozen heart that was brittle like ice, easily shattered and impossible to melt. His child was hurting and as his father, Timoteo could do nothing but watch because he was the cause of the pain. There was nothing he could do to ease that pain of betrayal but he could still arrange for a few things to make his son’s life easier in the future.

Timoteo remembered the scene he saw in his dreams. Xanxus with a hand around Bakugou Katsuki’s waist and the small bundle in the blond’s arms. His son hadn’t smiled but there was still a rare tenderness there.

“That hero boy,” Timoteo said. “Let me see the reports on his parents again.”

2

His classmates were fired up about the cultural festival.

Principal Nezu said that visitors would be limited and they would still have tight security but outsiders could still visit. They all got free tickets so they could invite their family members. Katsuki looked down at the two tickets in his right hand and the phone in his left.

There was a text from his father.

Sorry sport, we can’t make it. Have fun.

He shrugged, kind of already expecting the answer already. He would have sent the tickets off to Tsunayoshi but the brown haired boy was busy making up for the time he was away from school and was simply floored by exams and homework so Katsuki's tickets went to the trash.

Preparing for the festival was…*fun* if Katsuki really wanted to be honest. It was different from working with Varia or training or even being Victoire. It was fun in a way that he didn't know playing could be about.

He was in charge of the drums, which he was alright with. The whole school also seemed excited about the event. Of course, there were some not so wonderful voices from the other departments and Katsuki knew it was a normal thing. The Gen Ed and the others had a thing for the hero course students and the whispers hadn't gone on unnoticed.

Which was why they were going to kill them with music.

"Hey Bakugou, you alright?" Kirishima asked during their break.

"I'm fine, why did you ask?"

"Oh, you were absent for three days so I thought I'd check up on you."

Katsuki placed the drumsticks down and grabbed his water bottle. "I'm alright. Just had to take care of some shitty family stuff."

"I see, let us know if you need anything bro." Kirishima patted him on the shoulder. Katsuki knew the rest of the Bakusquad was hiding behind the pillar and he lowered his head, hiding a smile.

The performance was a hit and it successfully ended. Midoriya might have gotten into some trouble since Katsuki saw Hound Dog and All Might talking to the green haired teen. His classmates were chatting excitedly about going around and checking out what the other classes in each grade had planned.

"Bakugou! Look at this! They have sports competitions too, let's go!" Kirishima yelled excitedly.

The whole school was in a festive mood. There were haunted houses and beauty pageants, loads of different food stands and the support class was having an exhibit of their creations.

"Where should we go next?" Mina stretched out her back. The class had split up but since Principal Nezu closed off certain sections of the

school for crowd control, it was easy for them all to regroup. Besides, his classmates liked crowded places. They were rushing towards the fun since their teacher gave them permission to enjoy the festival as much as they wanted.

“Can we get something to eat?” Sero asked. “Bakugou, you want ice cream?”

“Not really.” Katsuki looked up and saw the menu beside the ice cream truck. There was a picture of an ice cream cone stacked and stuffed with lots of marshmallows. Marshmallow…that brought back some unpleasant memories.

“Kacchan～♪”

That overly sweet voice calling his name sent shivers down his spine. Bakugou didn’t have time to turn around as someone wrapped their arms around him from behind. The person rested their chin on the top of his head and didn’t let go as he pressed Bakugou’s back into his chest.

Fuck.

Katsuki saw his friends and classmates turning this way and they looked like they were about to squeal.

Holy fuck.

Who in the goddamn world let *this* freak out?

He struggled free and turned around sharply. “What the fucking hell are *you* doing here?”

Standing in front of him, in all of his very punchable glory, was the mastermind behind a multiple universe domination and the almost destructor of this world—

Byakuran.

—---

Mina was ready to scream in glee.

There was an older teen in front of them. He had a mess of spiky white hair and a purple tattoo under his left eye. His eyes were sharp and they were a light violet colour. Mina believed he might be a few years older than them but he was tall and slim, and had a really cool

fashion sense too. He wore a spiked choker and a white hooded vest over a long sleeve shirt. Jeans and ankle length boots, he looked like someone with a cheerful disposition.

Plus, he was good looking.

And he called Bakugou “Kacchan” while hugging him!

She was confused though, wasn’t Bakugou dating that Bel guy who claimed to be a prince? If so, then who was this Byakuran? Still, they looked like they knew each other so Mina just watched.

“What are you doing at my school?” Bakugou hissed.

Byakuran smiled. “I thought I would surprise you♫ Aren’t you happy to see me?”

“No. Not really,” Bakugou said coldly.

“You don’t have to be so cold. It’s been a long time since we last saw each other.”

“And I’d prefer not to see your fucking face ever again. Get out of UA.”

Yikes. That was harsh. Were they having relationship troubles?

“I know we left things off on a bad note,” Byakuran sighed. “But you really shouldn’t condemn me for things I haven’t done yet.”

Bakugou rolled his eyes, almost glowering at the white haired male. “That rule applies to everybody else *except* you.”

“Hey Bakugou, everything alright?” Kirishima was brave to step in.

“Oh, you must be Kacchan’s classmates!” Byakuran came closer and Mina found it slightly strange to be staring into his eyes that looked wiser beyond his years. “I saw your performance earlier, it was splendid!”

He was cheerful and easy going, with a chilled and laid back attitude. Mina wasn’t sure why Bakugou looked like he wanted to wrench the older teen’s neck.

“Excuse me, but are you a friend of Bakugou’s?” Tsuyu asked and Byakuran gave her a smile while opening a bag of marshmallows.

“He’s not.”

“We sure are!”

Two completely different answers.

Byakuran ate his marshmallows and he was still grinning. “Really Kacchan? We spent all that time alone together talking about our families’ future and you’re going to dismiss all of it like that?”

Bakugou’s face darkened while Mina had to clasp her hands over her mouth to avoid squeaking. Talking about their families’ future? Being alone together?

Oh my god! Was he really who Mina thought he was? Bel was close with Bakugou but they hadn’t been like…*this. She could see the spirit of gossip high in everybody else’s eyes.*

But Bakugou looked like he wanted to murder Byakuran on the spot.

“Don’t listen to him yelp about nonsense,” Bakugou spat as he shooed them further away from Byakuran. “He’s messing with you all. There’s nothing going on between him and I.”

“That’s hurtful, Kacchan.”

“Shut up, you marshmallow freak!”

Bakugou shoved him and the blond looked angry.

“Um…bro, do you need us to call the teachers?” Kirishima questioned and he tried to step forward but Bakugou snapped at him to stay back and no, he didn’t need the teachers to get involved.

“We’re fine, don’t worry.” Byakuran laughed as he slung an arm around Bakugou, who didn’t shake him off but still looked pissed. “We had a little altercation last time we met and I upset him. I came to apologize actually. If you will excuse us, we need a few private moments.”

Mina wasn’t sure if that was a good idea.

“Bakugou, are you alright with that?” Todoroki questioned, suspicious too. Midoriya was standing beside him and he looked concerned too.

“Voi! Hands off the kid.”

A gravelly voice interrupted in a brusque manner. A hand in a dark leather

glove grabbed Byakuran's wrist and pulled his arm off Bakugou. There was someone standing between Bakugou and Byakuran, a man in his early twenties. He was tall and broad shouldered, with long silver hair that flowed past his waist. He was dressed in a blue dress shirt and dark trousers, business casual style.

The man had a handsome face and he looked foreign. His eyes were a lot sharper than Byakuran's and the lines of his features were harder too. The aura around him was like a polished blade ready to cut down any opposition.

"Squalo?" Bakugou got pulled behind the silver haired man. He appeared to relax a little when this new man showed up. "Why are you here?"

"We'll talk later," he said. Squalo grabbed Byakuran's collar and scowled. "What do you think you're doing at UA?"

"I could ask you the same," Byakuran chuckled lightly, unfazed by the looming threat. He even ate another piece of marshmallow. "I'm just here to enjoy the cultural festival and catch up with Kacchan. We didn't get to finish our talk last time."

"There's nothing for you to catch up on. Get lost before I stab a fork into your eye," Squalo released him and turned around, eyes scanning over the crowd of class 1-A students.

"Are you sure you want to have a brawl here?" Byakuran had a worried look but his tone was challenging.

Mina and the rest of her classmates watched in apprehension as the two men faced off each other, the tension between them rising high. It was like watching two beasts size each other up before they tore out each other's throats. They both felt dangerous.

"Bakugou, are they…" Mina started with worry in her voice but she saw the blond boy buried his face in his palm, clearly exasperated.

"They're idiots. Just fucking idiots." Bakugou had a small pout as he crossed his arms in front of his chest, fuming.

"That I agree."

Everyone got spooked out of their skins and they whipped their heads around to see a teen with dark blue hair shaped like a pineapple standing behind them with a cup of coffee. He was in a camouflage T-shirt and dark pants. His eyes were different coloured like Todoroki's, only that one was

red and one was blue and he had a funny laugh.

Bakugou started cursing in multiple- and Mina meant multiple -languages. Even if she didn't understand it, she could still tell it was in a level of colourfulness that exceeded his normal cursing by the multitudes. He stalked up to the blue haired teen.

"Oh my fucking god! What is up with you assholes?" he screamed. "This is UA! Why the hell are you even here?"

"I don't feel like fighting Hibari today." The guy shrugged and gestured towards the crowds on the other side. "There's entertainment and food here plus Hibari hates crowds."

Kaminari nudged Mina with his elbow. "Bakugou sure knows a lot of good looking dudes, doesn't he?"

"They look like foreigners," Mina whispered back.

"Do you think one of them could be 'Xan'?" Hagakure asked quietly, keeping her voice hushed too.

"Who's Xan?"

Right. The boys didn't know about drunk Bakugou's rambling.

"I-" Over yonder, Bakugou inhaled, trying to calm his nerves but obviously failing. "That's it! I'm done with all of you."

Bakugou grabbed the blue haired teen by the wrist. Stomping over to Byakuran and Squalo, he squeezed himself between the two and pushed them apart. "Alright, break it up and stop embarrassing me you jackasses!"

The commotion drew the pro heroes' attention. Aizawa came up from behind Mina and he approached the odd group. There was a deep crease between his eyebrows as he stared at the men, almost as if he was scrutinizing them under a magnifying glass.

"Are we having a problem here?" the pro hero asked.

"No."

"Not at all."

"Of course not."

"No, Sensei."

Byakuran and the boy with the blue hair gave him a smile. Squalo's lips twisted a bit but his expression was calm. Bakugou just looked like the regular pissed off Bakugou.

Aizawa stared at the blond teen, hard. "Are you sure?"

"I'm sure," Bakugou answered and he pushed Byakuran and the boy with blue hair along. Uraraka tugged on Mina's sleeve and discreetly pointed at Squalo, who was left out of it by Bakugou. Special treatment. "They were just leaving."

The two shared a look that was hard to understand but neither said anything as they turned to leave. Bakugou let out a small sigh before grabbing Squalo.

By the hand. Not his wrist but his hand!

"Let's go talk somewhere quieter," Bakugou said, voice mellowing down.

The silver haired man said something to him in a foreign language but the blond just tilted his head to the side, mentioning for Squalo to follow. He raked a hand through his long hair in annoyance but complied with Bakugou's request.

"Go on without me!" yelled Bakugou before they disappeared around the corner. Aizawa-sensei was still staring after them, deep in thought.

"Sensei, is something wrong?" Yaoyorozu questioned.

Their teacher shook his head. "No, it's nothing. Keep enjoying the festival."

It didn't look like nothing.

"He's really hot isn't he?" Mina blushed slightly, trying to ease out the weird atmosphere. "They all are, actually."

"I like Byakuran-san's style," Hagakure said while waving her hands around. "Jirou does too!"

The girl with the earphones looked flustered as she asked her friend to pipe down.

"The other boy was cute too," Mina teased. "But it looks like Blasty's favorite is Squalo."

"I think his left hand might be a prosthetics," Midoriya said with a gulp and he was diving into one of his overanalyzing episodes again. "It looks

like he trains in some kinds of martial arts or does fitness programs, maybe that was how he knew Kacchan? No, Kacchandoesn'tlikethe gymsotheycouldn'thavemetthereThenmaybeheisanassociateofhisparents? Heistallenoughtobeamodel…"

Iida patted him on the back and Todoroki sighed. Nothing to see there, really.

"It's all because of guys like those that the rest of us don't have a chance," Mineta grumbled darkly with overflowing jealousy. Kaminari echoed that thought in a more light hearted manner.

They waited for a bit longer but Bakugou didn't return. Kirishima texted the blond, got a reply saying he's spending time with Squalo to tour the festival. Aizawa-sensei left too, didn't say where he was going but he didn't look too happy. Mina and the others decided to keep enjoying the festival on their own, maybe they would run into Bakugou and Squalo again.

It wasn't until the cultural festival ended that Bakugou turned up at their dorm again. It was late and the sun was already setting outside. He came in with a little bounce in his steps.

"BAKUGOU!" Mina caught him before he had a chance to escape upstairs. "You have to settle something for us!"

"What?" he gruffed.

"Which one of the three that turned up today is your actual boyfriend?"

Kaminari yelled from the kitchen. "My bet is on the Byakuran guy! As an Ex!"

"We think it's Squalo-san," Tsuyu said from the couch and a few others in class nodded.

"Guys, there's still Bel!" Kirishima protested loudly. He was hung up over the blond teen calling Bakugou Princess. Everybody in class made their vote for a candidate, all except Midoriya, which Mina sensed something fishy going on. She would talk to the green haired boy later and let him know her door is always open for him if he needed to talk.

The only thing was, it looked like none of their guesses were right.

Because Bakugou looked absolutely baffled.

"I'm not dating any of them." He shook Mina off.

“Really? But Byakuran—”

“Is a fucking manipulative shit that likes to play with people. Don’t mess with him.”

“The boy with the pineapple hair?”

“He’s two peas in a pod with Byakuran.”

“Bel? Squalo?”

“They’re none of your business.” Bakugou opened the fridge and took out his carton of milk. “They are annoying brothers at best.”

He turned to leave but there was no way they could just let him go like that! Mina jumped in front of him again but before she could open her mouth, Bakugou’s phone went off.

“Move it, Raccoon Eyes. I got to take this call.”

“Is it your parents, Bakubro?” Kirishima did say that Bakugou had been feeling a bit down since his parents couldn’t attend.

“No,” Bakugou answered with a smirk. “It’s my shitty boyfriend.”

He waved his phone and Mina saw the Caller ID: Giant Dick Tyrant.

Somehow she had a feeling that name wasn’t just referring to this mystery guy’s temperament.

Damn, Blasty was getting laid already?

Chapter End Notes

Finally got this one done. Really wanted to write these scenes XD

Anybody got more crazy ideas of how to insert our fav marshmallow alien in this fic? Also, next chapter I want to write some Squalo and Xanxus friendship (sort of) and more big bro Squalo with Katsuki and Eri

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

A shorter chap from Squalo's POV.

If you squint, there might be some platonic but still very violent Xanxus & Squalo + Squalo & Katsuki.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Ever since a young age, Squalo dedicated his whole life to swordsmanship.

He loved it. He loved the sleek and sharp edges of a glistening blade and the clash of metal during a duel. Squalo got familiar with how different kinds of swords sliced through flesh, how they hacked at bones and how the blood would splatter once a sword's tip exited the veins. Wielding a sword told so much of someone's past too, it spoke of who they were and how they came to be without the need to spill some emotional crap that Squalo could never fully get the appeal of.

Communicating through swords was much easier.

He had found many people who shared his excitement for the sword. There was a man in Spain who smiled, blood seeping through his cracked teeth when Squalo drove a finishing blow into his chest. There was a woman in Russia who left a slash on his leg with a final flick of her wrist before she swallowed her last breath. They were good opponents. Squalo respected each and every sword weider that he defeated or dueled in the past.

And he wore each and every scar he acquired from a battle or training with pride.

Most people would think this was madness. To be this obsessed with the art of swordsmanship could be considered villainess to most of the regular people. Fortunately, Squalo was born to a family associated with the mafia. It wasn't a big family or a powerful one but they were allies with Vongola so it wasn't all bad. Squalo had talent too, which in the mafia world was thought after and what placed people on top.

Power was everything in their world. The heroes might try and

promote otherwise but their brand of violence was similar in Squalo's opinion. The strong prevailed.

Meeting Xanxus was an accident.

Squalo might not enjoy social gatherings but it was part of being the mafia so he went to one of Vongola's functions. There were women fetchingly draped against the wall, sophisticated men in expensive suits smiling and laughing with good alcohol…it was utterly boring. With the rise of heroes, the definition of being mafia had to make some adjustments. It was more about peace and balance these days, which Squalo found to be stupid. They were the mafia! Loyalty and family. Blood and violence. Honour and pride. *That* was what they should stand for but all these people seemed to care about was how big the diamonds on their rings were or if they could get a new yacht.

And then he saw him.

Squalo had never seen someone with so much fervor. It was like staring at the sun or being around burning lava. That heat was hot and dense, raging like a tornado made of flames had swept through the place.

This was it.

He found a man whom he wanted to devote his skills to, someone Squalo was willing to follow to the edge of hell if needed. He decided then that he would be this man's sword.
They didn't immediately get along peacefully, of course. They have wrecked training grounds, *multiple* training grounds to be exact and a corner of the forest beside Varia's castle.

Squalo killed Tyr, the man known as the Sword Emperor. He lost his left hand in the process but he perfected his technique and became the second Sword Emperor of the mafia world. Vongola wanted him to assume the role as Varia's boss since he defeated Tyr, who held that position before but Squalo declined.

There was someone else who would be a better fit.

Xanxus took over Varia.

There had been some voices of disagreement. Experienced assassins didn't want a teenager running the show, even if he was the Ninth's son. Xanxus took care of that problem the fastest way possible: He beat everybody who had doubts into submission.

They were Varia. The winner wrote the rules and the losers kneeled. Simple. That was how their world worked.

Squalo watched as Xanxus stood in the middle of a pile of unconscious bodies. There was blood and melted metal on the ground. Charred soil and burnt spots in the grass, pots of land and thick threes disintegrated.

Xanxus turned to look at him, hard breath hissing out his lips that curled into a cruel smile. Seeing his own reflection inside Xanxus's crimson eyes was like seeing himself being engulfed by a land of fire. Red. Red. Everything was burning red. From the blood dripping to the ground to the lingering heat and smoke…it got Squalo's blood pumping.

"I think they got the message," he said slowly from where he was leaning against the remaining wall that was still intact. "Boss."

Boss.

That title came so naturally out of his mouth that Squalo knew he made the right choice. He pledged his loyalty to the right man.

Xanxus wiped the sweat off his forehead and flexed his hand, hiding the dimming light of his flames behind a closed fist. "Damn straight," he said and his shoulders relaxed ever so slightly. "Clean up the mess, trash."

He was Varia's boss and the man who was going to be Vongola Decimo.

Squalo often got irritated because of how much of a spoiled and entitled prick Xanxus was but he had never thought about betraying Xanxus. Not when he pledged to never cut his hair until Xanxus became Decimo and not when Vongola Ninth told him that Xanxus had been "exiled" after the Cradle Affair.

Exiled his ass. The lies they told the other families to keep things hushed was almost laughable. Xanxus was frozen in a big chunk of ice cube. The Ninth knew Squalo saw it happening and they had a long talk about what would happen to Varia afterwards. Vongola wouldn't get rid of Varia and the officers, including eight years old Belphegor, wouldn't get more than a slap on the wrist if they chose to cooperate.

They should have all been executed but called it pity or mercy or the love of a father (whatever), in the end, they lived.

Squalo spent the next eight years keeping Varia together and sharpening his own skills. As skilled and crazy as they were, they were all essentially teenagers then. For fuck's sake, Belphegor wasn't even out of elementary age yet. It was a lot of headache but this was for Boss. Squalo was going to ensure Xanxus could come back to a Varia that was stronger than before.

They failed their mission, if they were going to die, it better be under Xanxus's hands.

Sometimes the nightmares found him. The tearing pain and memories of a smoke filled basement haunted him in his dreams. There would be screaming. Lot of it. Gunshots and people yelling while chaos filled the air. Squalo felt cold even as his boss's flames burned in front of him, torching the carpets and polished walls. He saw Xanxus facing off Vongola Nono, smoldering rage coursing through his entire body and everything was so red again.

Then ice stole everything from them.

Cold, glistening ice robbed the desperate passion and rage from Xanxus, stealing his fire and heat, putting out his flames.

A reminder of his failure. He failed to get the throne for Xanxus. He knew his boss wouldn't have wanted anyone to interfere with the battle between him and his adoptive father but what good was a sword if it couldn't slay the owner's enemies?

Squalo locked any of those thoughts away, shoved them into the back of some godforsaken corner of his mind and he kept working. He worked for Varia. He worked for Vongola.

Timoteo di Vongola wasn't the boss he chose to follow but he would serve Vongola's needs.

Because that was what Xanxus wanted. He wanted nothing but Vongola at its strongest.

They didn't get as many missions as before. Mammon picked up a side project and Squalo took interest in the blond boy. Xanxus found the Japanese brat and Squalo thought the kid had some spirit and potential. He didn't like playing babysitter but Katsuki was a hell lot easier to deal with than Bel. Fucking dumbass prince really got to learn how to keep the fatalities lower when he went on missions.

Throughout the years, a few other Varia members (new faces mostly)

had come to call Squalo “Boss”. The swordsman always corrected them. He was the Captain, not Boss. Their boss was frozen like a turkey forgotten in the back of a freezer but not dead.

Not dead.

Katsuki shared that same belief. Xanxus was not dead. He was more sentimental about it too. Well, Squalo guessed it couldn’t be helped when the boy wasn’t raised the mafia way and he was relatively normal. Bel was the crazy kid. Katsuki was…more *normal* by mainstream society’s standards.

Squalo wondered how Xanxus would feel if he knew there was someone willing to shed tears for him…besides Levi. Kid was definitely feeling a guardian bond though. Squalo knew that wrenched feeling of how it seemed like they lost a piece of themselves or the sensation of the sky falling down. He felt the same in his nightmares.

He didn’t find the kid as annoying as children should be. Squalo did wonder once or twice what Xanxus was going to think when he saw the final product though. They would have a cloud guardian in no time.

Then came the day Xanxus got thawed out of the ice.

Squalo saw Xanxus in a room that was filled with machines and smelled of medicine.

“Boss.” His voice was much more rough than it should have been, almost breathless even. Xanxus looked exactly as Squalo remembered him, except for the raw scars that covered him from head to toe now.

Xanxus’s eyes trained on him and for a very brief fraction of a second, he looked lost. He needed time to recover though, his muscles had been placed under stasis for too long that they needed time to regain optimal function.

Whatever. Xanxus was breathing and that fire in his eyes still burned brightly with the same drive and insanity. That was all Squalo needed.

Squalo didn’t move as Xanxus staggered towards him. It was probably a good thing he told Levi to pick up the brat. When Xanxus finally stood in front of him, he called again: “Boss.”

Xanxus grabbed Squalo’s hair, fingers wrapping between the silver threads. “What the fuck happened to your hair?”

“Couldn’t get you out faster, sorry Boss.” Squalo didn’t avert his gaze but really, fuck Timoteo and everybody else for keeping Xanxus frozen in an impenetrable ice. He tried. Don’t think he didn’t try but only Vongola Ninth knew how to melt the ice and CEDEF was watching. “It’s been eight years.”

Xanxus’s hand tightened around his hair and it hurted a little, not that Squalo cared to complain. It finally felt real. Xanxus was back. There was a shift in the lines of his scarred jaw and Squalo’s body was twitching, ready to move out of the way in case Xanxus defaulted back to his habit of blasting people.

Silence followed. No cursing. No shouts or slaps or any kind of complaint about their failure or why it had taken his rain *eight fucking years* to get him out.

Squalo waited. He was used to waiting now.

Xanxus released his hair when he finally came out of his thoughts. “Where are the others?”

“Alive. There are some new faces in the lower ranks and Ottavio has command of the most active squad right now, got promoted to watch all of our asses by the Ninth since he wasn’t in on the coup.”

Xanxus nodded and he flopped down on a chair, probably exhausted already even if it was just a short walk. Squalo would need to get Lussuria to come check Xanxus out later.

There was a knock on the door.

“Hey Boss, I got a gift for you.” Squalo lifted a sharp grin and he opened the door.

The look on Xanxus’s face had been priceless.

Squalo couldn’t stop laughing even as Xanxus kicked Levi for trying to hug him or when Katsuki, in his puffy ball gown, tried to shank their boss. It was the right brand of chaos that he missed. They were Varia. Violence was how they communicated.

Squalo was happy to have Xanxus back at Varia but that didn’t mean he wasn’t thinking about stabbing the man when he booted the door to Xanxus’s room open later on. Xanxus had been mostly recovered and he was giving all the new members hell. They might be used to Levi’s training from hell or Bel’s craziness, but they certainly hadn’t

dealt with Xanxus's temper before.

Now, Squalo was used to seeing naked people. It came with the profession and emergency first aid was basically the first thing anyone in the mafia learned as a child. Xanxus liked to sleep naked too so it wasn't the first time he would catch his boss without clothing on.

What he didn't expect was to find the boy he had been training *in* that same bed, naked.

With Xanxus's dick still in him.

"Holy fucking hell! I didn't train him up so you can fuck him," Squalo complained loudly while reaching for the alcohol cabinet when it was just him and Xanxus along in the studies. They'd probably need something strong, at least he knew he needed something strong right this instance. "Kid's supposed to be our cloud and Mammon's money tree, not your sex doll. If you need someone there's a bunch of whorehouses downtown."

Xanxus was lounging on his overly regal looking chair and looking way too comfortable. He didn't show an ounce of shame for being caught in bed. "You are making it sound like I forced myself on him."

"You're obviously doing something very wrong if you have to force them. And we would have heard the brat screaming bloody murder last night if you did. Wouldn't be surprised if he blasted your cazzu right off either." Squalo sat down across from Xanxus and passed him an empty cup, pouring them both a drink. "I can tell he agreed to it, doesn't mean *you* got to let it happen. Fuck, kid's *fifteen,* Boss. He's younger than Bel."

"That make a difference?"

Squalo bared his teeth at the man but there was no malice or disgust. "Scum."

"Trash."

The swordsman drained his cup and poured himself another. Some things didn't need to be said between them.

The boss and his second in command.

They were best friends…if that term was applicable in the mafia world or even in Varia. Squalo knew Xanxus well enough and Xanxus

understood Squalo like the back of his hand. Xanxus had what it took to be boss, he knew people even if he didn't like dealing with them.

"So what of him?" Squalo questioned. "Are we keeping him around? Or do I gotta tell Mammon to ditch him? That's gonna be a hassle because of how much money the kid's making."

Xanxus picked up his drink and the liquid swirled in the transparent cup. "*She* stays. *He* is going to be a hero."

Squalo scoffed to signal that he understood. Victoire was now Boss's lover. Katsuki was a good student and he was skilled enough to be their cloud but that wasn't relevant when he aimed to be a hero. A small part of Squalo found this annoying.

Of course Boss couldn't just pick a simpler candidate and get things over with, he had to make this more complicated than it should be.

Villain and hero.

That was an interesting relationship dynamic.

"If he betrays us?"

The heat gathered in his palms, enough to melt steel and lead used for bullet proof vests. "I'll kill him myself."

That was the boss he knew. Squalo wouldn't expect anything less. Maybe he should have felt pity for the blond boy but he took one look into Katsuki's eyes and he knew the kid understood.

Love was fun and games but family and pride would always come first.

It wasn't really Squalo's business about who Xanxus had in his bedroom so he let it be. Hey, at least they knew basically everything about this kid and they wouldn't need to question his loyalty or ulterior motives. No need to run another background check either.

The man had needs, the brat was happily willing to fill those needs. Well, Squalo couldn't care less then.

Anything else that came with it were bonuses.

Levi had a week of crying about Xanxus's "virtues" but everybody else accepted it easily. Mammon did grumble about not being able to work Katsuki as often since Xanxus wanted private time with his lover

though.

And life went on normally (as normally as mafia life in a world of heroes and villains could get anyways). The new Decimo candidate was a wuss that Squalo wanted to shove into a can of throw into the sea but his rain guardian had potential in swords. It just pissed Squalo off that the Yamamoto brat was more into baseball and was wasting his talent, even after he got the memories from the future.

The future was a wild one.

Jesus Christ and for the love of Mother Mary or whatever other kind of higher powers than people worshiped, Boss was going to get a biological kid in the future! Squalo decided that he needed to drag Katsuki into the medical room at some point and have a professional doctor do a very VERY thorough examination.

He didn't like surprises.

Boss's kid was very much a surprise that almost made him stab himself in the foot while he was polishing his sword. Not that he wasn't looking forward to seeing Boss absolutely freaking out. The man might be throwing stuff at them and cursing in Romanesco profanities but that didn't stop them from laughing their asses off about him starting a family. Of course, Squalo could dodge the glass or other stuff being thrown his way but he chose not to, just so he could keep teasing Xanxus.

Levi had a plan in place for a second born already too and he found the girl with the rewind quirk. Fuck, that idiot was finally useful for once.

Squalo wasn't good with children but he could see the benefits if they invested in her well enough. Injuries were common in their world. She would be very useful to have around. Thus, even though it wasn't very Varia of them, Squalo gave the girl more special treatment and didn't subject her to as harsh of a training routine as he would with normal mafia kids her age.

Honestly, Squalo would much rather deal with Bakugou Katsuki than get accustomed to someone else. At least with the blond, Squalo could be himself and didn't need to think too hard about the politics or be gentler. He could trust Katsuki to run a few things around the castle too. He did like the teen. Sometimes he would think that if he had a younger sibling, this might be what it felt like.

Bel didn't count. Bel was an overgrown gremlin with a thirst for blood.

Which was why Squalo was standing inside UA right now.

It really wasn't the wisest choice for a member of the mafia to be surrounded by a bunch of heroes but hey, he wouldn't be Varia if he wasn't daring. They did missions that were thought to be *impossible,* he could infiltrate UA no problem, just had to get a little creative.

He wasn't a big fan of anything heroic or associated with highschool festivals (the mafia school events usually included some form of violence or games of tactics) but here he was, surrounded by a bunch of smiling buffoons.

Katsuki looked alright. Squalo hadn't seen him much since the kid moved into dorms and the last time he got out was when Xanxus needed calming down because of Sawada Tsunayoshi's inheritance ceremony, which was a brief two minutes meeting before they fed Katsuki to Boss like he was a human shaped sedative (it worked like a charm by the way).

Still, he would rather not have to run into Byakuran. Squalo frowned lightly when he saw the white haired young man with Katsuki. He heard CEDEF was supervising the younger version of Byakuran ever since the Tenth generation came back from the future…but looked like that alone wouldn't be able to stop Byakuran if he really was up to no good.

Squalo would chop Byakuran up any day and anytime but he still had enough brains left to know that pulling out a sword inside UA was going to trigger alarms. Byakuran knew it too so they didn't end up in a full out brawl.

The swordsman didn't even need to ask to know why Byakuran was here. It was a festival and the little git loved crowds. He probably found annoying the hell out of Katsuki interesting too, judging by how dramatic he was acting, posing as the teen's ex.

Add in Mukuro and Squalo was ready to put someone on a skewer.

Squalo could hear what Katsuki's classmates thought of them and the only thing he was thankful for was that Xanxus wasn't around to hear it. Goddamn it, there were already some staff in Varia's castle that thought Eri was his spawn, he didn't need rumors of him banging Boss's lover to be flying around too.

Byakuran was a fucking piece of shit.

“Kacchan~I’ll see you again soon!”

The man left with a huge smile on his face.

“...Why do I have a feeling that won’t be the last we see of him?” Katsuki grumbled besides Squalo and the swordsman rolled his eyes, ruffling the blond’s hair with his left hand. He got the same feeling too.

Mukuro wasn’t interested in the whole fiasco, he was more interested in Lunch Rush’s food and he had vanished somewhere into the crowd.

Squalo and Katsuki found a quieter corner of the school.

“So what are you doing here?” Katsuki asked.

“Had a few arrangements that needed a personal touch to them. Boss didn’t want anybody else to do it.”

Katsuki gave him a look that said he didn’t fully buy it but Squalo couldn’t say anymore. They were inside a hero school and he was pretty sure there were surveillance and audio recordings all over campus. Squalo had been careful about not letting his face get caught on camera, which was surprisingly easier than he expected with the huge crowd.

It would be suspicious if they stayed at one corner of the campus for too long since it was a festival so they wandered around the outskirts of the pop up stands. Katsuki threw a baseball cap with some kind of hero’s logo on Squalo’s head.

Squalo hadn’t experienced a Japanese highschool festival before and honestly, he was too old for shit like this. Friendship games just weren't his thing either. The food was alright but the beauty pageant…yeah, highschool girls weren’t what he was into so he couldn’t really give an opinion beside that they were flashy with their quirks or support items. Belphegor or Lussuria might like this better. Levi too with all that stupid porn he watched.

He tilted his cap lower, careful to avoid catching the pro heroes’ attention. They might not be the strongest individually but they had experience on the job. Squalo was sure they could snuff out crime from a mile away.

He had been here for exactly one hour.

That should count as enough “bonding time” like those parenting books Levi and Lussuria shoved on his face said were good for children’s development. Cause yes, even if Katsuki was fucking Boss and he knew the shit that he was getting himself into, he was still a goddamn teenager who got disappointed when his parents couldn’t show for an event.

Normally Squalo would have told the kid to fucking deal with the lonliness and suck it up but here was the thing…Katsuki never actually complained about his parents being a no show. He was used to their absence. Squalo might not be the best guy for advice but he still remembered that his parents actually cared enough to come see him after he lost his left hand. It was one thing if Squalo wanted to see them but another for them to exhibit some kind of effort. They didn’t come to pity him of course, just to congratulate him on earning the title of Sword Emperor and asked if he needed any recommendations for a prosthetics doctor. Wasn’t the most sentimental reunion but hey, that was simply how things worked back home.

The issue he had with the kid was that he was usually so loud about everything else. From complaining about snobby designers to annoying sponsors, from homework to yelling at Bel for acting like an idiot…Katsuki had never been one to hide his displeasure in front of them. Not to mention, Squalo did feel kind of bad for throwing the kid at Boss whenever Xanxus was in a mood.

The bruises that marred his skin were nasty. They had a very toxic relationship. Damn kid called him a masochist for not dodging the things Xanxus threw at him, Squalo thought that he was the kettle calling the pot black.

So yeah, in a way he guessed that this was him compensating for Xanxus’s behavoir. It was just like usual, Squalo cleaned up Xanxus’s messes because he was his boss, like how Squalo was the one who bought Katsuki gifts on holidays or important dates. Xanxus wasn’t big on gifting, which they all knew, but Victoire needed to keep up a fake image of a loving relationship. Sometimes Katsuki would just take Xanxus’s card from Squalo and buy himself stuff too.

Hey, it kind of was working.

Katsuki smiled at him even as Squalo grumbled that this would have been more of Bel’s thing. Fuck, maybe even Fran if that stupid brat

didn't chose to go with Mukuro when they went to fetch him from France.

But a day or two like this wasn't all that bad either.

He was turning soft. Squalo decided that he needed to pick up some tougher missions to slice and hack at a few people to get his head back in the game.

Squalo sat down on the bench and watched the crowd with Katsuki. The day was almost ending but everybody still looked like they were having a blast. It had been long enough. Katsuki sat down beside him in silence, eyes casted to the ground.

A small explosion set off within his palms, burning a piece of paper to ashes.

They communicated through code while moving around the festival.

Mammon needed their help.

All of them.

Their illusionist spoke with Xanxus and Varia was going to help Mammon break a curse. They weren't always a baby. Mammon used to be the greatest illusionist in the world, *as a grown adult.* Someone gathered Mammon and six other people who were thought to be the strongest in their individual fields at the time and turned them all into babies. It was the main motivation that drove Mammon into acquiring wealth as they needed to find a way to break the spell. Now, that culprit was offering *one* of the seven cursed babies a chance to break free from that curse.

Only the strongest would be given freedom.

Each of the babies were to choose a team of champions to fight on their behalf. Mammon asked Varia to be theirs.

Xanxus agreed.

Mammon and Xanxus went to find a skilled craftsman to create the Varia rings so they could better fight with their flames. Bel and Levi were taking care of the normal missions with the lower ranking members. Lussuria was dealing with Eri and holding down the fort. Meanwhile, Squalo had to arrange for a few things in Japan since the battle was going to happen here.

And he thought that Katsuki had a right to know what was going on.

Xanxus was going to get a cloud ring made for Katsuki anyways.

"...I'll find a way to get a break from school and get off campus," Katsuki said quietly in German. Good, he was getting better at it too.

"We don't need you. You brat should focus on school."

"I'm not sitting it out," Katsuki retorted with a huff.

"You don't trust us to handle things?"

He turned around and Squalo could see himself in those ruby eyes. The red in there didn't burn like Xanxus's did but it was warm. It was too warm and it made Squalo uncomfortable. He wasn't used to that sappy and warm fuzzy stuff. That was not the familiar cold of the hard steel sword or the rage and dripping blood that he was used to.

"We're family."

Those two words were a whisper from the teenager's lips. He was all serious, like a willing sacrifice ready for the altar.

They were Varia. They served the same sky. Squalo remembered the eight long years of waiting for his boss to return and he didn't do that all alone. As crazy as the other fuckers were, Lussuria and everyone else still stuck it through and stayed with Varia. Even Belphegor and Mammon, the least loyal of the group remained. Then there was this kid, who was a dress up doll for the cameras with a premature understanding of the mafia who wholeheartedly believed in them, in Xanxus.

Sawada Tsunayoshi and his Tenth generation could praise love and friendship all they want. They could enjoy their little circus show of soft kindness but that would never be Varia. For them, it was about trust. It was about respect and putting up with each other's sometimes very creepy or bloodthirsty personality quirks. It was being at each other's throats but also having another's back. It was avenging a comrade's death but laughing and pouring wine on their gravestones in celebration of good riddance.

That was what family meant to them.

"You sure you're not just looking for another excuse to fuck shitty Boss?" Squalo managed a grin. "Lussuria recommended you to take it

easy and not go as hard every time you two meet up. His sun flames might be useful in healing but it ain't a cure all."

Katsuki shoved him off the bench, face red from embarrassment. "Oh fuck you!"

Chapter End Notes

> I think I've been reading too many Bakugou faces consequence fics again and now I really want to write some AU of AU ideas for my Coiled Dragon fic...Like, what if Bakugou had been born a girl or what if Midoriya had been born a girl (this latter one I'm super intrigued by the idea but no concrete idea yet)? Or what if the heroes decided to arrest Bakugou as they expelled him?

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

> A relatively plain chapter to explain the rules since a lot of ppl probably haven't seen KHR manga. Spoilers involved

1

Something wasn’t adding up.

Aizawa could feel the hair on his arms standing up when he noticed the commotion happening around his class. Of course it just had to be his class. He couldn’t even have five minutes of quiet to sip on a cup of coffee in peace.

There were a few strangers there. Two of them were foreigners who looked like they were around their early twenties and they were arguing harshly. One was dressed quite fashionably with messy white hair and a tattoo under his eye. His smile didn’t carry any malice but somehow, it unnerved Aizawa. This man might look cheerful but somehow, Aizawa didn’t think he was…normal. Maybe that wasn’t the right word but he could sense a hint of unamiable calculation ticking inside that man’s head, like a fox plotting how to steal a chicken from the barn.

The other had long silver hair and looked more mature. Aizawa found him to be unsettling too. He didn’t feel like a regular civilian to the pro hero. In fact, this man gave off an aura that Aizawa was more familiar to find on those he encountered on the job in the night. Something sharp and dangerous swirled under those steel grey eyes, like a sword tucked into its sheath but it was ready to slice open its enemies’ throats at any moment.

Due to his profession, Aizawa couldn’t help but profile the two immediately. They looked like they didn’t lack wealth but they didn’t flaunt it around either. Their postures and the muscles on their arms told him that both kept themselves fit and were confident about their physical abilities. The silver haired one was more crass and hot tempered but he seemed to be holding himself back, wary of the white haired male. They knew each other but they weren’t on good terms.

There was a third person besides Bakugou, a middle schooler with blue hair shaped like a sort of tropical fruit and heterochromatic eyes.

Normally Aizawa wouldn't have thought too much about it but one glance at his red eye with the number six in it made him feel like he had been targeted by a poisonous snake. The feeling was fleeting, brushing across his consciousness very briefly before vanishing like smoke dissipating into a fog. When Aizawa looked again, the teen was just like any regular teenager. Full of openings and laid back, unsuspecting of any possible danger.

The weird part was that they all knew each other.

And they were all familiar with Bakugou.

Aizawa really didn't like this.

"Are we having a problem here?" The pro hero questioned the strange group but his eyes were focused on his student. No one was hurt and Bakugou wasn't showing any emotions other than obvious annoyance.

They all immediately brushed him off. Bakugou was pushing and shoving the white haired man and the boy with blue hair like he was a shepherd herding sheeps, shooing them away. After that, Bakugou grabbed the silver haired man and they melted into the crowd.

Aizawa noticed the man had a prosthetic left hand.

"Kirishima," Aizawa said slowly, still weighing if he needed to dive into this further. "Who were they?"

Midoriya knew Bakugou the longest but in terms of closeness, Aizawa would say that Kirishima was closer to Bakugou. If the blond was willing to share anything, it would be with the red haired boy.

Kirishima looked sheepish as he scratched his head. "Not really sure, Sensei."

"We think the white haired one might be Bakugou's ex!" Ashindo exclaimed.

"That's just speculation though," Sero added as he rubbed his chin. "I can't see them together. Blasty looked like he was ready to kick the guy in the nuts."

The other male students of class A winced slightly, even Aizawa felt a bit of imaginary discomfort down there.

"Bad break up?" Kaminari muttered to his friend. "Byakuran did say

they left things on a bad note."

Aizawa sighed but he dismissed them. His kids were just as clueless about the situation as he was. Bakugou really liked to be secretive and the man couldn't be sure if that was a good thing or not. He also noticed that Midoriya's mood was lowered…god, teenage crushes were not Aizawa's cup of tea. As a teacher, he had dealt with these things before and he could say with absolute confidence that he hated 90% of the issues that arose from raging teenage hormones and love.

But so far, he didn't see a need to intervene with Midoriya's crush yet. As long as it wasn't disrupting classes or hindering Midoriya's learning or well-being then as a teacher he would only sit it out. Heart breaks were a part of life too anyways.

Yep, even Aizawa could tell the green haired boy had no chance with the blond.

The pro hero went to the surveillance room. Only Ectoplasm was there and Aizawa nodded at him.

"Tired of the crowd already, Eraser?" Ectoplasm asked while offering him coffee. This room was filled with multiple screens, each one showing a different angle of a corner of the cultural festival.

Aizawa shook his head. "Just wanted to check something out."

He sat down in front of the screens and ran a facial recognition for Bakugou. The blond popped up on the screen right in front of him. Bakugou was with the silver haired man, who was now wearing a baseball cap. It was harder to capture his face but it was enough for Aizawa. The two didn't do anything strange or too intimate, not even a hug. Bakugou still looked pretty happy though.

"Isn't that Bakugou?" Ectoplasm poked his head over. "Is something wrong with him?"

"...No, I don't think so." The one that had something wrong with them was the man beside him. The way he moved and talked…Aizawa was pretty sure he had professional training and now the question came down to if he was special ops? Underground hero? Or maybe…the not so legal side?

Everybody that came through the gates today was checked. Aizawa pulled up the silver haired man's information.

Superbi Squalo
Age: 22
Gender: Male

He worked for a security company in Italy. They specialize in some very high end security details and from what Aizawa could see, it looked like a predominantly male field of work that reminded him of the toxic masculinity portrayed in Western movies about the military or police. Not that Japan wasn't too different. There were still people who thought that female officers or heroes couldn't compare to their male counterparts too. Squalo's credentials all came back clean.

Just to be safe, he checked out the other two people's information too. Byakuran (with a last name that Aizawa couldn't pronounce) was the owner of a relatively well off family in Europe and he was planning on entering university in the States. The blue haired teen was Rodoku Mukuro, who went to Kokuyo Junior High, a school close to Namimori Middle. This explained how he might have known Bakugou.

Very soon the day was over. Aizawa watched as the crowd trickled out of school and the students were packing up while robots took care of the trash. He waited a few minutes before finding the person he was waiting for. The pro hero followed behind him and he wasn't too surprised when he realized that they were heading towards a street with less and less people. The man came to a stop in an empty corner and took off his baseball cap.

"Is there a reason why you're following me?" the man with silver hair asked with an arched eyebrow. He looked slightly annoyed as he crossed his arms in front of his chest.

"As Bakugou's homeroom teacher, I have a few concerns about the people that appear around my students, especially after the year they had." Aizawa came out from behind the pole and approached the man. "I need to ask what's your relationship with Bakugou."

The man flashed him a sarcastic grin that revealed teeth, it kind of felt like a "What? The brat can't know people outside of school now?"

"No, but it wouldn't hurt to be more careful considering he had been targeted specifically by villains lately."

That got the man to lower his guard, but not completely. Raking a hand through his hair, he looked ticked off at the mention of Bakugou's kidnapping.

“The kid’s like…a younger brother.” He was uncomfortable admitting that, like he wasn’t used to talking about *feelings.* “He comes around to where I work sometimes and his parents couldn’t make it today so I came. Didn’t want to make a big scene or the bastards at work wouldn’t let me hear the end of it. Think I’m going soft on the brat.”

Aizawa nodded. It was logical (you’d be surprised at how many weirder excuses he had heard from past parents or relatives of a student) and he didn’t notice any strange behavior from the man towards Bakugou. He wouldn’t say he trusted Squalo fully but at least this man didn’t seem to be lying.

“And Byakuran…you have issues with each other?”

Squalo narrowed his eyes. “He’s the head of a competition. Created a big hassle for our headquarters a while back so I don’t like him much.”

“I see.” No he didn’t. Aizawa wasn’t familiar with the competition between foreign companies but if he kept pressing now, it was going to look suspicious. “My apologies for keeping you. Please have a good evening.”

He stepped aside for the man to pass.

Squalo shrugged dismissively. His eyes lingered on the pro hero for a second, long enough for Aizawa to look at him questioningly. Finally, Squalo moved past him, his expression fixed in a condescending sneer.

“It’s fucking annoying to get questioned but glad to see that at least somebody else still cares about the brat enough to give a damn.”

The pro hero frowned, whipping his head around to ask what the silver haired man meant but Squalo already disappeared around the corner. All Aizawa could see was a busy street corroded with people and cars.

Aizawa felt a headache coming on. What did Squalo mean by that? Bakugou had a bunch of classmates and a good family, of course there were people who cared about him.

He probably had a lot to think about tonight.

2

Tsuna was worried about the representative battles. Reborn asked

both of his students to enter this fight for him but Tsuna was a bit anxious about needing to fight some of his old foes again. Mukuro came by once and announced that he was going to represent another cursed baby, the genius scientist—Verde.

He didn't have a good feeling about this. The rules were so unclear but even Reborn didn't know much. The man with the iron mask, that was the person who cursed Reborn, hadn't announced the specific rules yet.

Tsuna arrived at a lavish hotel with Reborn. Dino invited them to dinner tonight and possibly to talk about a few strategies or precautions that needed to be set up against the different scenarios. Since it was a representative battle, they weren't certain how many players each of their teams could contribute.

And Tsuna really didn't want to attract more attention to Namimori, whether it was the hero's or the police's.

"Thanks for coming," Dino said as he waved at them in the lobby. He was in a tailored white suit and he gave Tsuna one of his dashing smiles. "Dinner reservation is already booked, don't go easy on me and eat to your heart's content."

Tsuna could barely get a response out before he felt his feet being lifted off the ground. His world was spinning and he heard a creepy laughter that really shouldn't be here.

"Ushishishi, I'll be taking this!" the person who was holding Tsuna captive announced in an overly cheerful tone and they took off.

The brown haired teen could feel himself being manhandled and eventually, they burst into one of the suits.

"I picked up some neat trash!" Belphegor yelled as he booted the door open.

"WAIT! What are you doing??!!" Tsuna's shrieks were ignored even as he struggled against the hold on him. He was screaming even more when he saw who else was in the room.

Leviathan was drunk. He had multiple bottles beside him and he was dancing naked, singing some weird tune that made no sense even if his voice cracked. Lussuria nodded at them but he was more focused on lifting weights. Squalo was seated in an armchair while holding a drink in his hand and watching the news on TV. There also seemed to

be someone else in front of the coffee table besides Squalo, facing away from Leviathan, but Tsuna couldn't see clearly from his angle.

"Where's Boss?" Mammon's voice came from behind Tsuna.

"In the room in the back," Squalo said as he took a sip of his drink.

Belphegor took a few large strides before dumping Tsuna into the inner room. "Here's a present, Boss."

"Owww!" Tsuna landed face first into the tatami and he struggled to scramble back up. Rubbing his nose that was in pain, he felt like he had just been let off of a very violent roller coaster. "What's Varia doing here…and YEEEP!"

He immediately scooted backwards and hit his back on Belphegor's leg, expression fixed on a mix of being shocked and terrified. "No… way. X-Xanxus? You came to Japan too?"

Xanxus was in a loose dark coloured yukata and half lying on the elevated tatami across the room. There was a folding screen behind him with painted branches on it. Still looking as intimidating as ever, the man glared at Tsuna as the sakazuki styled sake cup pressed against his lips. There were some traditional Japanese dishes that went well with sake on a wooden platter in front of him.

Bakugou was there with him. Dressed in a black kimono with orange flowers embroidered on it. There were a few wooden hair accessories in his hair, small gems formed petal like patterns and wrapped around the wood, dangling from his head. The blond poured more alcohol into Xanxus's cup.

"Bakugou-kun is here too? Don't tell me that you're representing Mammon?" He *really* hope he got it wrong.

"Why, of course." Mammon looked at Tsuna like he was dumber than a piece of rock.

Bakugou too. "Of course I'm joining, dumbass."

"Mammon's representative is Varia plus Bakugou-kun..." Tsuna was completely devastated. "This is totally unfair! They are killing pros! And shouldn't there be a rule that you can't use your quirk outside of school? Or on non-heroic matters?"

"I also shouldn't be dating mafia, fuck the rules." Bakugou set the sake

bottle down and leaned in against Xanxus like an overgrown cat rubbing against its owner for attention. Xanxus spared his lover a glance as he drained the sake in his cup.

They could all tell Bakugou was probably more Victoire right now. Bakugou wouldn't be so bold in his love declarations.

Tsuna was pretty sure the only way these two were breaking up was either through death or Xanxus actually messed up big time, like cheating on Bakugou. They were going to have a kid in the future too. Tsuna was already horrified.

"Just as I thought," Dino's voice thundered along with hurried footsteps. "Are you alright, Tsuna?"

Tsuna turned his head around and saw Dino and Reborn standing by the door. The blond haired man looked worried.

"I-I'm fine…" So far. But this was terrible. Tsuna didn't want to face off Varia again, plus, the killers have Bakugou on their side this time…wait, maybe that was better? Heroes couldn't kill…could they? Still, it was going to hurt a lot if Bakugou blasted them with his explosions.

Also, Xanxus wasn't as blood thirsty as Tsuna had seen him last time.

Xanxus scuffed when he saw Dino charging in. Turning his attention to Tsuna, he glared at the teen. "I'll erase you in this representative battle."

Okay, he took that back. Xanxus was still Xanxus. Still very much the wanted to kill him Xanxus. Tsuna gulped with great difficulty but then he looked up. Everybody else did too.

"Who's there?" Xanxus's gun fired faster than his question. The blast shattered a piece of the ceiling and a man in a suit fell down. He was wearing a checkered hat and carried a large briefcase made of metal.

Hearing the commotion, the rest of Varia came rushing in, weapons in hand and ready to fight.

"My my, what a harsh welcome. My apologies though, I forgot your room number and I was checking room to room from the outside." The man got up with a hearty laugh as he patted the shattered glass off of himself.

Taking off his hat, he greeted them with a warm smile. He was a relatively plain looking one, with eyes like they were hastily painted on by a brush, flat nose, and simple black hair parted at the side.

“I am the planner for the representative battle, you may call me Tsunomichi. I am here to explain to you the details of the battle of the rainbows.”

“Are you the man with the iron hat’s messenger?” Mammon asked, suspicious of the newcomer.

“Yes! Yes! That is me, Tsunomichi!” His answer was followed by a series of childish giggles, like he was about to introduce the concept of “the sky is blue” to a group of toddlers.

“VOOII! Are you fucking with us? What’s with the baby talk?” Squalo yelled at him, looking pissed.

“Sorry, I can’t help it.” He laughed some more before taking off his gloves, revealing skin covered in ink. “Let me see…Ho ho ho, my memory is terrible, you see. Gotta make a lot of notes. Yes, I see, I am here to talk about the ruly-rules of the battle. Where did I put the other thingy thing now?”

He bent down and searched through his briefcase but still kept laughing.

“Geez, is this guy going to be alright?” Belphegor asked his comrades quietly.

“He seems like a happy little guy,” Lussuria replied with a hint of uncertainty. None of them thought it was normal to be laughing *this* much. Maybe he got hit by somebody’s quirk?

“…He’s weird.” Tsunao completely agreed with Dino on that one.

Tsunomichi got back up with two identical boxes. “Alrighty! For the representative battle, the candidates gathered by each of the Arcobalenos will be regarded as a team. Each team will then receive one of these boxes. Ta-da! They’re wristwatches!”

He showed them the contents of one box, showing eight well made watches. Six identical ones in the bottom, a larger one with a different colour and one small custom made for a baby’s wrist.

“There are six battler watches for the representatives, one boss watch

for the leader of the representatives, and one for the Arcobaleno. The rules for the battles are simple too. The team whose watches are destroyed are the looooooosers! But if the boss watch gets destroyed, your whole team automatically loses too."

"I knew it, we're going to have to fight," Tsuna groaned. Of course it would be a contest of strength. On the other hand, the Varia members look excited. "But wait…why is the boss watch being targeted and not the Arcobaleno's?"

"Are you really that dumb?" Squalo pointed his sword at Tsuna, causing the brown haired teen to back off immediately. "It's called the representative battle, why the hell would they target the Arcobalenos if there are champions fighting on their behalf already?"

"EEP! I'm sorry!" Tsuna ducked behind Dino.

"So we're just supposed to sit this one out?" Mammon asked after sharing a glance with Reborn.

Tsunomichi rolled up his sleeves and checked his notes. "It would be bad if your pacifiers broke in the middle of battle but my superior said to avoid that messy mess-o, he prepared a gift for you all."

The two Arcobalenos in the room looked doubtful but neither said anything.

Levi pulled on a shirt and some pants as he came closer. "So why watches? Wouldn't it be easier to have some kind of smaller accessories?"

Tsunomichi grinned at him before doubling over in laughter. He kept laughing even as Levi yelled at him for wanting to pick a fight. The weird planner for the representative battles finally straightened himself after a few minutes.

"Hee, I'm sorry. I almost forgot. Your watches will notify you of your assigned battle times. The allotted time frame for authorized battle will happen once a day but you won't know the time until one minute before it starts. After which, the watches will also start counting down to how long you could fight. So you see, you have a time limit on these battles." He was oddly proud for remembering that bit. "This fight is a battle royale."

Dino and Xanxus weren't surprised, Xanxus even seemed to be happy about it.

“Every team will be fighting each other at the same time. Of course, you can also form alliances with each other so don’t be surprised if you find yourself being ganged up on by multiple other teams. And that concludes my explanation.”

“Boss, are you okay with letting him leave?” Squalo asked and Xanxus gave a small nod.

Tsunomichi waved at them all before leaving through the door properly.

“Alliances…how interesting,” Reborn muttered while deep in thought.

Mammon turned to Xanxus. “Boss, we’re all Vongola here…what do you think about an alliance?”

“I’m not teaming up with anybody,” Xanxus spat. “Now get lost.”

Tsuna scratched his head. End of discussion right there. Oh god, if it weren’t because it wasn’t time for the real representative battles yet, he was sure the rest of Varia were going to pounce them right here.

“We have four days until the real battle…just a second, Bakugou-kun.” Tsuna turned to the blond teen. “What about school for you? Isn’t UA a dorm system right now?”

“You don’t have to worry about that. We got things taken care of.” Bakugou stood up and walked out of the room, coming back a minute later with a girl about six years old in hand. She had her hands over her eyes. Her hair was bluish white and wavy and she was dressed in a simple white blouse with a blue skirt.

There was also a horn on her forehead.

“Is Mr. Levi dressed? Can I open my eyes now?” she asked.

“Yes,” Bakugou said.

The girl had red eyes and she looked…very not Varia. Also very *familiar*.

“Isn’t that the girl the heroes are looking for?” Tsuna blinked slowly as the girl’s face matched the one in his memory. There was an amber alert out for her. “It’s her. You are the ones who took her?”

“Not *took*,” Levi retorted with a grunt. “Helped her escape from a lunatic.”

“I didn’t know when Varia started being so friendly to children.” Dino shook his head, clearly not believing it. “Is there a reason why she’s not with an orphanage or the heroes?”

Xanxus glanced at him. “Mind your own business, trash.”

The Cavallone boss looked towards his old classmate but Squalo didn’t explain anything either. Dino nudged the swordsman with his elbow. “Don’t tell me that’s actually your kid.”

Squalo kicked him in the shin, leaving a boot mark on Dino’s suit pants. “The fuck, of course not!”

“Why are the heroes looking for me?” the girl questioned innocently.

“Cause of that Chisaki guy. They’re going to take you away if they find you.” Squalo cranked his neck as he tucked his sword away. Tsuna saw the girl flinched and she moved closer to Bakugou. She was scared of going back to whoever that Chisaki was. But the way Squalo framed it, it sounded more like he was scaring her into being afraid of coming in contact with the heroes too.

Something about that felt wrong to Tsuna but he opened his mouth and closed it, not sure of what to say.

Reborn stared at her, expression unreadable. Finally, he turned to Xanxus. “I take it that she’s not the sixth member on your team?”

“Wha—” Tsuna suddenly went hushed. Lussuria, Belphegor, Squalo, Leviathan, Bakugou…that left one battler watch for Varia’s team. There was no way Xanxus was going to make this little girl act as a representative, right?

Xanxus scoffed. “Does she look like Varia quality to you?”

Reborn seemed to like that answer. Nodding, he ushered both Dino and Tsuna to leave since it was obvious they weren’t going to form an alliance with Mammon’s team.

“Reborn, that girl…” Dino started when they were in the elevator.

“The heroes raided a yakuza group that was selling quirk cancelling bullets on the black market,” Reborn explained simply. “The bullets were made from human flesh and blood. That girl’s amber alert also came out a day after the raid.”

“What does that mean…Oh,” Tsuna paused in his step as they got off the elevator, nearly bumping into Dino. “The yakuza was using her to make the bullets?”

His eyes widened, horrified at the thought of it.

“Your brain is working properly for once, Dame-Tsuna.” Reborn jumped onto the teen’s shoulder. “Yes, that is what happened. Not sure how Varia got a hold of her but if they are keeping her around, she must be useful in some way.”

“None of us would be fighting with quirks though.”

“So her quirk must have a different effect than simply cancelling quirks.” Dino rubbed his chin as he led them down to the restaurant. “But Xanxus said she’s not one of the representatives so if anything, she’s only got a support role.”

That was probably a relief. There was no way Tsuna could bring himself to hurt a little girl. If he could, he didn’t want to fight Varia or Bakugou either.

“Is it alright to leave her with Varia?” Tsuna wasn’t an expert in children’s mental health but leaving a group of assassins to raise a little girl…um, that didn’t sound right.

Reborn looked at the teen strangely. “Why not? She’s obviously healthy and not in any immediate danger. Besides, the heroes needed to sort their own stuff out first…”

He trailed off, leaving things unsaid. Tsuna really didn’t like this part about his tutor. Reborn always liked to let him guess things instead of telling him out right.

Dino patted him on the back. “Don’t worry, Tsuna. Bakugou is there too so they wouldn’t go too overboard. Come on, they have great food here.”

Sighing, Tsuna followed him into the restaurant.

Chapter 22: EXTRA

Chapter Notes

Just a short extra, first part is in second person POV.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

If someone spent a week at Varia's castle (and survived it), the first thing they would notice was probably that Xanxus spoiled his box animal. *A lot.* It wasn't to the point of how he spoiled his lover silly but considering it was Xanxus they were talking about, the affection was certainly there.

Bester was even allowed to sleep in Xanxus's bed sometimes. God, this was the worst part of this whole thing actually. It was like Xanxus didn't think his subordinates had enough reasons to be terrified and dreadful of entering his bedroom.

Xanxus didn't like to be disturbed when he was sleeping. Not to mention, there was a high chance of seeing his lover in his room. Now that meant double the trouble! One grumpy half asleep Boss was hard to deal with, plus possibly interrupting his private time with his lover? It was definitely a sign that whoever was unfortunate enough needed a trip to the infirmary.

But Xanxus was the boss and they couldn't argue with the boss. Not unless they wanted to eat a bullet.

So they learned to get used to seeing Bester lounging around Xanxus's office and shedding fur everywhere (white fur was VERY obvious on their dark uniform by the way). The liger would hog the best spots where the sun heated the floor warm and wander the halls with a feline grace, giving new recruits that judgy cat look about how he saw them as inferior. On rare occasions, he would let out a roar or two that made everyone jump or pounce onto people just for fun (not so fun for its victims).

However, there were also softer sides to the king of the jungle.

Boss's lover has a box animal too and it was a jaguar called Cemani. It was a bit smaller in size compared to Bester but just as ferocious. It was also more active and protective of the female population inside the castle. Make the wrong move on them and you answer to the jaguar.

Bester and Cemani could often be found together. They greet each other with licks and soft purrs. Cemani would nuzzle her head under Bester's chin and Bester returned the affection by rubbing their heads together. Sometimes it was weird to see two judgmental large cats staring at you when you were only trying to get a midnight snack.

However, most days the people in Varia's castle and frequent guests from Vongola knew that there was no need to be surprised if they saw the box animals with each other. The liger and the jaguar had their tails intertwined as they both laid on the ground, curled up close together while both enjoying the afternoon sun in the spring especially.

Boss's lover and his daughter sometimes joined the two box animals in an afternoon nap. You found out about this when you needed Boss's signature on some paperwork but saw his wife (in every way except for that official government piece of paper) and daughter cuddled up with the two feline beasts. The blond woman was in a light blue robe and she kept an arm around her daughter, who was in a lion onesie. They were half buried in white and orangish patterned fur, sleeping peacefully.

They were adorable.

It was absolutely worth getting kicked in the arse by Boss.

Now you sat on the cold stone stairs (to cool your aching butt) and pondered how the hell did Boss land such a wonderful wife and daughter but you were still single. Sure, Boss was strong and had wealth but he was also the biggest spoiled dick personality wise that you had ever met.

Do not get you started on Boss's habit of wasting food.

Do. Not. Ever. Do. That.

Boss was a prick and down right abusive sometimes. It was a miracle Captain Squalo still had such luscious hair. But Boss did love his family, at least, as far as you could tell. Boss's way of expressing love was very constipated and this was Varia, nothing a good dose of screaming or a round of battle couldn't fix!

So it really wasn't a big surprise when you saw Lady Victoire yelling at Boss or Bester and Cemani tumbling together in a fight. Box animals took after their owners after all. They knew where to draw the line and never actually beat or bite the other up so bad that they

needed professional medical attention. Usually a few bandages and a good bottle of rubbing alcohol was good enough.

Speaking of which, you don't really know why Boss didn't appoint an official cloud guardian yet. Everybody knew that his lover/unofficial wife was his cloud and Varia had a cloud division (you would know, you were in it). She was running it and she was even wearing the damn ring too! But for some reason, Boss never officially gave her the title, like how he never proposed or gave her a wedding.

Maybe this was how he wanted to keep her safe? You stopped wondering after it started hurting your head. Boss's love life was already messy even though he had the same partner for almost ten years.

Sighing, you turned to look out the opened window to get some fresh air. Bester and Cemani were in the garden, doing their usual things while staying under the shades of some trees. It was probably sad that even box animals got a better love life than you.

…Oh, and now Bester was on top of Cemani.

He was moving, teeth around the jaguar's neck.

Alrighty, this was probably when you should stop looking. Animals deserve some privacy too.

…Would this be a bad time to report to Boss? You really hope he wasn't doing the same thing as his box animal.

—---

It wasn't in his plans to start a family but life apparently liked to punch him in the face out of the blue.

Xanxus had a few issues about having a kid. He didn't particularly want children. Never liked those soft squirmy little monsters much and he didn't think he would be a proper father. Besides, he ran a castle full of insane assassins, it really wasn't the most stable household for a child to grow up in. They might be accidentally killed off considering it was like a survival game every day living in the castle.

But somehow (somebody up there was fucking with Xanxus, this he was sure of) his younger lover got pregnant. There had been an incident with an astray quirk, some weird flame chemistry, and

suddenly Xanxus was getting a kid. No, not even a kid that could run and dodge or feed themselves on their own. He got a baby, a tiny little baby girl whose bones felt like they were made of pudding. She responded to his commands with incoherent babbling and cried like she was made of 100% water.

Xanxus had no idea how to deal with that thing.

So he chose to let other people handle it, like he usually did with his work. He was the head of Varia, his main job was to delegate. Put a suitable person in the right position and be done with it.

This didn't do well with his lover.

Xanxus opened his eyes and saw two pairs of red eyes staring at him. One pair was round and large, staring at him innocently like a newborn bambi curious about her surroundings. The other he was familiar with, long blond lashes framing a beautiful scarlet that always burned with such passion when they landed on him. It was a comforting colour. Like the blood he was used to spilling and the red wine in his cellar, like his own fire burning in the palm of his hands. Familiar and comforting, accepting him for all he was.

"Papa's awake," Katsuki whispered into the girl's ear. It wasn't like that made a difference though, Xanxus could hear him just fine. The baby giggled, tiny hands clapping together like she heard something funny.

Katsuki placed Matilde on Xanxus's chest and Xanxus went stiff immediately. The new weight on his chest wasn't heavy but the contact with the child's soft body made him tensed up. He wasn't sure if he should be moving even an inch. If it had been Katsuki or his subordinates trying to dogpile him, he would throw them off with one hand but he obviously couldn't do that with this girl. What if she hit her head on the bed at the wrong angle? Babies had really delicate necks so what if that caused her head to snap off?

Matilde patted Xanxus's chest like she was testing if the surface beneath her was solid enough and nuzzled closer. Drooling over his shirt, her fingers found his chin and she smiled at him.

Fuck.

The fuck was he supposed to do in this situation?

"Get her off," Xanxus gruffed while glaring daggers at his lover, who

was looking way too smug at the moment.

“She’s our baby girl,” Katsuki said and there was the barest hint of sadistic joy behind his words. Leaning his weight on one hand, he leaned down closer to Xanxus. “It’s been four months since she was born and you’ve barely held her. You don’t have work today and you’re not hurt or covered in someone else's blood, no excuses this time.”

Xanxus scowled. He could feel his daughter’s drool on his chest as he laid in his bed. She chewed on her knuckles lightly and wiped her hand on Xanxus. Fucking hell, if this girl didn’t have half of his blood running through her veins, Xanxus would have tossed her out the door already. “There’s you, the bunch of trash, Horned Trash, and nannies. That’s what the nannies and maids are for.”

“They’re not her father. You need to be the one to spend some time with her.” Katsuki ran a hand through Xanxus’s hair, brushing back his bangs that grew slightly too long. He was a pro hero but Katsuki decided to stay a bit further away from the spotlight. Instead of competing with his old classmates for the No.1 hero spot in Japan, he decided to make a name for himself in Europe. After they had Matilde, he chose to adopt a more on-call work schedule instead of patrolling certain streets long term. Routine was dangerous for someone connected to Vongola’s higher ups and he still had to make time to keep up Victoire’s appearance, even if it was just an occasional blurry picture from far away. He would take short term missions. Those that last around a few days to a few weeks and have periods of relatively quieter work in between.

“I don’t know how to take care of a brat. You don’t count, Horned Trash doesn’t count either.” They were both at the age where they could run and clean up after themselves when Xanxus met them. “Get this sloppy mess away from me.”

Xanxus felt like if he so much as breathed too hard on this squirmy little *creature* then she would crumble like a sand castle coming apart under a wave. He reached out and grabbed Katsuki’s wrist, pointing towards Matilde with his chin. She was slipping down his chest and Katsuki stabilized her in place.

Katsuki casted his eyes down to the girl and sighed, “It’s not like I’m born with a manual on how to take care of children in my head either. I can learn, you can learn. Xanxus, don’t do to her what our parents did to us.”

Xanxus stayed silent. He turned his face away while Katsuki ran a hand down Matilde's back, humming slightly to sooth her. Matilde pouted, small eyebrows knitting together while she blabbered meaningless noises, demanding some attention from her father.

Little shit got Katsuki's temper. Or maybe that was Xanxus's. They were pretty similar in that way.

He didn't really know if she could be counted as cute. Lussuria and Levi always gushed over her and she got compliments from the Tenth generation idiots but to Xanxus, she was just a marshmallow of soft skin and surgery smelling fat. Matilde was taken care of well by the maids and Katsuki. She was a chubby little baby and even though Xanxus hadn't been too involved besides the time when she was first born, he still gave her the best money could buy.

Matilde already had a better childhood than either Xanxus or Katsuki. She didn't have to worry about satisfying her basic needs and she was always surrounded by people who truly cared for her. She wasn't going to feel the pain like they did.

Hesitantly, Xanxus brought a hand up besides the little girl's head but hovered it above her hair. A pale hand covered his scarred one and pushed it down all the way. Xanxus's palm came in contact with soft raven hair that felt fluffy. Matilde tilted her head, confused by the sudden contact but still accepted it, rubbing against Xanxus's palm.

"See, it's not that hard," Katsuki laughed and he laid down next to Xanxus, resting his head against the older man's shoulder. Matilde was on her stomach as she wiggled around, trying to shift over to Katsuki. However, she grabbed onto Xanxus's index finger and didn't let go.

"...She's mafia," Xanxus said, seeming out of the blue. He didn't provide any explanations or context but they had been together for years, Katsuki could understand him. Matilde was Xanxus's daughter, there was no life besides one in the mafia waiting for her. They could try to give her a *normal* childhood but that would ultimately undermine her in the future.

Just look at how much work that Sawada trash had to put in in order to catch up.

"I know that," Katsuki said softly. "But that doesn't mean we had to copy our parents' mistakes in raising her. I'm not asking you to be doting or super sweet with her either…just, at least try to talk to her or hold her once a day."

Matilde laid on Xanxus, dozing off.

Xanxus wrapped an arm around Katsuki, pulling him in. “Next you’re going to start demanding family day at the amusement park.”

The blond shifted up slightly and kissed his lover on the cheek. “If you want to go, I’m not against it. We can’t take Bel though, he got banned.”

“Again?” The prince was almost twenty six. Xanxus didn’t know what Bel could have done to piss off the amusement park staff…unless he killed someone there? No. Bel wouldn’t have gotten caught.

“He got banned from a different one.”

Xanxus grunted, sounding almost like a laugh.

Katsuki pulled the blanket over his lover and daughter before settling back down against the Varia boss. Xanxus attempted to move Matilde over to Katsuki but she had a tight grip on his shirt.

“Can she stay in our room tonight?” Katsuki asked. He had already invaded Xanxus’s bedroom but due to the strange hours the assassin and hero worked, they mostly kept Matilde in her own nursery room with a nanny. Katsuki would sleep over there if Xanxus was away.

The dark haired man didn’t reply, which meant he agreed. Matilde was already fast asleep on his chest anyways. Katsuki poked her chubby cheek slightly and he looked really happy. Stupid kid, even if he grew up he was still so easily pleased by the most idiotic of things.

“Xanxus, you’re awfully quiet.”

“What the fuck do you want me to say?” Xanxus whispered harshly. “If I tell you to take the kid and fuck off, you’re actually going to do it and I’m going to get a call from Sawada trash tomorrow telling me they’d take good care of you over there. Also, the other scums in the castle are going to look at me like I murderered their fucking box animals.”

Katsuki narrowed his eyes. “No swearing in front of Matilde.”

Xanxus huffed, pressing his forehead against Katsuki’s. Scarlet eyes met crimson ones.

“If she has potential, Varia will be hers,” he told him, expression blank

and voice serious. Xanxus wasn't going to be the kind of father who would let their child have piggyback rides or play tea parties with them. But he would damn well make sure they know how to handle themselves and fend for the things they cared about.

"The coarse language is part of the package."

Katsuki smiled, fingers ghosting over the scars on his lover's face. "Then you better get ready for her to be gunning for your throne."

Xanxus didn't disagree with that. His child couldn't be weak. Even if she didn't inherit his power, she would learn how to manipulate people from all the great teachers around her. He'd make sure of that too.

Katsuki was humming again. The lyricless song lulled their child into a deep slumber and her hands loosened around Xanxus's shirt. Xanxus kept his arms around both Katsuki and Matilde.

It felt odd to be sharing such intimacy, to feel the blood connection and hear the sounds of two other hearts pumping beside him. Xanxus wasn't used to this. He might be more lenient about Katsuki staying in bed with him but having a child that felt like she would be crushed if they so much as made a wrong turn during their sleep was uncomfortable for him.

Still, he didn't chase them out of bed.

He didn't want to start a family but he was given one. They were his and if there was one thing Xanxus was notorious for was that he was territorial.

Wealth and power.

Family.

This was what Vongola was built for at the beginning anyways.

Chapter End Notes

Some fluff as we head into the middle of the month!

Chapter 23: Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

WARNING: Switching POVs

Edit: Also, look at this pretty art by Rei0 of Xanxus with Katsuki!

https://64.media.tumblr.com/de3c188cc7879bbfb92f8b9b07c25e2b/3b62d5a4373082c9-28/s2048x3072/fbf63ac6fbaa2f96dba0c8bc442809a2b6624209.jpg

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

How did Katsuki get permission to go off campus?

It was simple, actually. They used Varia's connections and got an Italian hero agency (which was mostly a front for Vongola's business) to approach Katsuki about an overseas internship opportunity. His parents were more than thrilled and happily signed any documents that they were presented with.

"Don't embarrass us, Katsuki."

Katsuki decided that he didn't hear any of his mother's usual nagging.

Aizawa-sensei looked like he had doubts. Katsuki was pretty sure the man went to dig deeper into the agency's legitimacy and other legal stuff. After a few meetings with Principal Nezu and Aizawa-sensei, they signed off on the paperwork to release Katsuki from campus. He would still get the assignments emailed to him but his due dates would be pushed back to accommodate the internship.

The self-proclaimed "Bakusquad" was shrieking in jealousy and good intention before he left.

"I can't believe you get to go overseas in the middle of a semester!" Raccoon Eyes was like gum and Katsuki was having a hard time scraping her off his arm. "To Italy too! So romantic!"

"I'm there for business," Katsuki huffed.

"You can still have some fun, take lots of pictures for us."

“Good luck on your internship, Bakugou.” Kirishima was laughing. “Hopefully it turned out better than mine.”

Eri’s case was probably going to turn into a cold case. Varia was going to make sure that happened.

But Katsuki said nothing.

He wasn’t sure if it was the right choice but if the heroes knew about Eri living with the mafia…well, it wouldn’t do well for any of the parties involved. Katsuki also didn’t mention anything about how there actually was no internship.

Katsuki was going to fight a battle on Mammon’s behalf.

So technically Katsuki supposed he could count this as a chance to get more real battle experience? Or that was the sort of coherent logic he was trying to convince himself with.

He was staying in the hotel that Varia arranged for them all. With Ironmask’s rules, it wouldn’t be wise for a participant to be found alone by the other teams. Katsuki knew he had skills but he didn’t think going up against the other teams alone would be too smart either.

The hotel was the familiar lavish European style that the mafia liked. It had large oil paintings and gold railings, along with carved wooden chairs and thick carpets.

Sitting on the carpet, Katsuki combed Eri’s hair while humming softly. He was dressed as Victoire but in a more sporty type of clothing. Wearing a pair of black sports tights and a red crop top that had a skull on it, he did apply a little makeup to his face as well to appear more feminine. Laces and skirts were nice but not really practical for battle, especially a battle where they knew the enemies were going to come after them with the big guns.

They didn’t want to confus Eri further. She was too young, it wouldn’t be good if she accidentally let slip that Victoire was a boy or that Bakugou Katsuki crossdressed to the wrong person. It was the same reason why they taught Matilde to call Katsuki *Mama* instead of trying to get a baby to differentiate which situation was appropriate to use different names, and expect her to not make any mistakes. Mistakes for normal children were normal but it could turn fatal in the mafia world.

Maybe when they get older Katsuki could teach them properly.

Eri was bigger than the last time he saw her. Katsuki found that to be encouraging. His gang of homicidal maniacs were doing a lot better at this child care thing than he expected. She fit his old dresses well so Lussuria mostly dressed her in them. There was a phase where Mammon made Katsuki modeled for a lot of English companies and Eri looked so cute in the school girl styled skirts and little white blouses.

“It’s a bow,” the little girl gasped quietly, she still wasn’t used to speaking up, as she looked into the mirror. Katsuki had braided her hair into a little bow shape on the back of her head. She had nice hair for trying out different braids, and enough volume of it to make sure the style did not collapse either. “You’re amazing, Victoire-Nee.”

Katsuki smiled. She looked more like other kids her age when amazed. Also, it looked like Stain’s language classes were working because she was able to pronounce his name.

The other Varia members were scattered around the suite. Squalo was skimming some work on his laptop and Bel was playing video games. Xanxus sat on an armchair behind Katsuki, occasionally caressing the nape of Katsuki’s neck while looking bored. Occasionally Squalo would ask for Xanxus’s opinions on a few matters. Mammon floated off to the side, sipping on a juice box.

“Boss～” Lussuria called as he came in with a black box in hand. Levi was close behind him. “The rings are here.”

He opened the box and distributed the rings to each of them, minus Eri of course.

Katsuki slipped it around his right index finger and admired it. It was a silver one that was shaped like a shield and it had Varia’s name and their lion looking symbol on it. Twin Xs were on either side of the shield portion, connecting to the band of the ring. Xanxus’s ring had spikes that looked like a crown on top of the shield.

It was a beautiful ring. The mafia had figured out how to fight with rings from the future memories they received. Mammon actually took money out of their own pocket into commissioning this old guy, who apparently had been dealing with the Vongola rings for decades, into making them the Varia rings. It certainly showed how committed to breaking the curse Mammon was. Hell, with the illusionist’s obsessive tendency of hoarding money, Katsuki never thought it was possible for

Mammon to spit any money back out after it entered their bank account before.

But Mammon was willing to spend a fortune in getting these rings made so their chances of winning could improve.

The first thing all of them did when they got their rings was to summon their own box animals.

“My darling little Kuu~” Lussuria practically leaped onto the peacock. His box weapon was a peacock with yellow glowing eyes and it squawked at them.

A white mink with bangs that concealed its eyes scurried to perch on Bel’s shoulders. People said that box animals resemble their owners, which was scarily true when looking at Visone Tempesta. It had Bel’s smile and when it chittered, it sounded exactly like Bel’s laughter. The red storm flames enveloped its tail and ears.

Katsuki wondered if the mink would like a little silver tiara too.

Maybe he would get one for Bel later.

Squalo didn’t let his shark out for too long since it was a fish-typed box animal and they were on land. He gave it a short check over and nodded, pleased with reuniting or meeting his box animal for the first time depending on how they looked at it.

All of them already had memories of fighting alongside their box animals from the future. However, as the box animals were newly made and they just received the rings at this point in time, it was like they were meeting their partners in battle for the first time.

“Livya.” Levi was giving his lightning rayfish pats on the head. Since it was also of a more aquatic nature, Levi let it return inside its box soon.

Bester appeared besides Xanxus. Yawning, the white liger stretched out his spine before lowering his head towards Xanxus.

“Big cat,” Eri gasped quietly as she tugged on Katsuki’s sleeve. There was a bit of nervousness in her voice. “It’s a lion.”

“He’s a liger,” Katsuki corrected. “Ligers are born from a lion and a tiger.”

He summoned his own box animal too. The jaguar licked him as soon as she was free from the box and her fur tickled Eri, making the little girl giggled.

Then Bester and Cemani's eyes met. Katsuki wasn't sure if there was secret Morse code between large cats but the two beasts approached each other. Letting out low rumbles that almost sounded like purrs, they were communicating. Cemani circled around the room and Bester followed. The jaguar circled back beside them, glancing between the two humans before rolling her eyes and lying down next to their feet.

Bester settled down next to Cemani and licked her ear. She lowered her head, stretching out her neck for the liger to lick and bite lightly.

"...Did we just witness a complete mating ritual?" Levi sat down as he gawked at the two feline box animals that were getting acquainted with each other.

Squalo laughed and he didn't bother to lower his volume at all. "Not a complete one, it's not like they boned each other right here."

Bel and Lussuria joined in on the cackling and wolf whistles while Katsuki's face burned red. Mammon sighed like an old man watching youth these days dive head first into what old timers considered "scandalous" acts.

"What's 'boned'?" Eri asked.

And suddenly the room went very quiet. The dead silent kind of quiet.

"It's when animals produce babies," Bel said but he quickly got shoved off the sofa by Lussuria and Levi because they all knew what the girl's next question was going to be.

"How do they produce babies?"

And there it was.

Katsuki mentally smacked Bel and face palmed.

"Eri-chan~Why don't we go check for snacks downstairs?" Lussuria smiled, not even attempting to hide the fact that he was trying to change the subject. Even if Eri suspected something, she only nodded and went over to the sun guardian so they could go downstairs to the all day buffet to have a cookies quest.

Now Katsuki could actually smack Bel on the head.

“She asked a question, I gave her an answer,” protested Bel defensively. “The Prince didn’t even use any bad words!”

“That’s not the problem.”

Katsuki went over to grab him but that cackling little mink of his was waving its tail around and being a general nuisance.

“Voi! Stop messing around!” Squalo separated them and shoved Katsuki at Xanxus, causing the blond to tumble into Xanxus’s lap. “We got the rings so it’s time to get to work. The old man said he made some improvements when he carved these rings, go figure your shit out before the battle starts.”

The group gave him a chorus of acknowledgement then dispersed into their separate rooms.

“I’m sending Stain out to scout the other teams, you got anything else you need, Boss?” asked Sqaulo before he fully exited the room. Xanxus didn’t say anything so Squalo left. He closed the door behind him too.

Katsuki settled into a more comfortable position in Xanxus’s lap. Resting his head against his lover’s chest, Katsuki admired the ring on his finger again.

“If Victoire started wearing a ring on her left ring finger it’d break the internet,” Katsuki mused. “But it has to be a smaller one, this one’s too flashy and it’s not one of a kind.”

It was a guardian’s ring, not the type of jewelry that Victoire could pull out and flash in front of cameras.

“One isn’t enough for you?”

“It’s different.” The blond teen wrapped his arms around Xanxus’s neck.

“Take one of the scums with you and get one yourself then,” Xanxus said while rolling his eyes. “You have my credit card. It’s not like the old man’s going to shoot you dead if you suggested that we’re getting married. Might get extra nosy and annoying but we might even flush out a few worms.”

Being in a high position in the mafia, Xanxus’s marriage was a

bargaining chip. Not a lot of people knew that Xanxus wasn't the Ninth's blood scion so in their eyes, he was still a possible candidate for Decimo. Even if Vongola's current Tenth was Sawada Tsunayoshi, who was to say the eleventh boss would still belong to the Primo line if Xanxus had a child now? And a child was easier to control than an adult or a teenager. That would certainly make a few people anxious and give them funny ideas…that would be when they could take those bastards out.

Anything that could destabilize the family had to go.

Katsuki pinched the man behind the waist and frowned. "You're such a jerk. Can't you at least put in some effort to pretend to care about me?"

"A ring's going to show I care about you?"

"It's not about the ring, dumbass."

"You just said it was."

Huffing, Katsuki purposefully leaned most of his weight on Xanxus. "Now you're just acting dumb cause you don't like this topic. I swear you are the most insufferable piece of shit ever."

Xanxus didn't deny it. Wrapping an arm around Katsuki's waist, he attempted to kiss the blond but he got stopped by Katsuki's hand. Sighing, he leaned back into his chair. "You get a break at the end of the year, I'll take you to the cottage in Barcelona and you can pick a fucking ring."

Katsuki's eyebrows twitched slightly, intrigued by the proposal. "For real?"

"Sure, just stop being a little bitch." His hand trailed up Katsuki's back, playing with the ribbons along the fabric. "But I'm not doing a wedding. The old man's not going to let me hear the end of it with all the traditions and stuff."

"Deal." Katsuki leaned in and gave him a kiss, smirking at the thought of a nice vacation alone with his boyfriend. He liked the bastards of Varia and little Eri but sometimes, dealing with them was hell on earth.

It'd be nice with just him and Xanxus having some quiet time to themselves.

Katsuki opened his mouth to let Xanxus's tongue in. They weren't in a rush so the kiss was slow, dragged out on purpose to savor the sweet moment that was rare with how they both had busy schedules across the globe. Relaxing completely, Katsuki moaned into the kiss, feeling how their tongues tangled together and hot breaths mingled with each other. He tasted a lingering bitterness of wine and the fruity aroma mixed with cinnamon made him a bit lightheaded.

Xanxus's hand was on the back of Katsuki's head, deepening the kiss. After a few minutes, they finally parted and Katsuki's breathing was uneven. It was really horrible but he really did like Xanxus. From the man's face to his confidence and the strong way he carried himself… Katsuki knew that even without the flames he was in too deep.

And the scariest part was that he didn't regret it one bit.

"Why did you bring Eri?" Katsuki settled down against Xanxus and yawned. His lover's warmth always made him sleepy. "I get bringing the mist division but you really are putting a lot into this for Mammon."

Xanxus pulled a lot of their manpower and resources here for this. Katsuki was happy to see his lover putting in so much thought for their family, even though Xanxus kept on calling them trash and was still awfully mean to them.

"It's worth it." Xanxus didn't explain any further. "That no nose scum is going to look after the girl, so don't rain shit on me for bringing her along. Having all of us here is the most efficient and we're going to kill all the trash then go home."

"We're not killing anybody," Katsuki reminded. The representatives for each of the cursed babies were all people they were familiar with. Some were bosses of allied families and some were Vongola. They could hurt each other but not kill, ending each other would only weaken Vongola. This was part of the reason why Katsuki wasn't too worried about joining. "You promised me no actual shitty unaliving is going to happen."

"Fuck off, you damn runt." Xanxus nudged him. "Don't tell me what to do."

"Language."

"Fucking mind your own first."

Katsuki pushed himself off Xanxus and walked towards the door. As much as he loved Xanxus's embrace, he decided that he needed to leave or they would just start having sex if this flirting kept going. It was one thing to have the rest of Varia know they were up to naughty business but another to have Eri accidentally walk in on them…and knowing his luck, he wasn't about to test fate. "Cemani! Let's go."

Cemani got up and walked alongside Katsuki. Bester lifted his head but Xanxus glanced at the liger and Bester laid back down.

When the door clicked shut, Bester growled in displeasure. Xanxus got up and sat down next to it, pulling both his guns out and disambled them to check the parts over.

"We got work to do," he ordered the beast. "The brat ain't gonna take your mate and run, stop growling. They're not going anywhere we can't get to."

Bester let out a low roar as if agreeing to that statement.

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The first day of the Rainbow Representative Battles arrived and the watch started beeping rapidly while Katsuki was in the middle of doing his homework. Eri was drawing across from him. She said she was going to draw all of them. There was already a really big black spiky stick man that was supposed to be Levi and a rainbow coloured stickman with a mohawk that was Lussuria. She was working on Bel next and the girl gave him a gold crown because she needed all of the silver crayon to draw Squalo.

Katsuki wore a black halter top and gray sweatpants. Dresses were nice but he would rather fight in something more comfortable. Squalo took the rest of Varia out to hunt for the other teams so only Katsuki, Xanxus, and Mammon were at the hotel with Eri.

The noise from the watches made Eri hold her hands to her ears. She became even more startled and nervous when she saw Xanxus sitting up from the sofa that he was sleeping on.

"Shut up!" Xanxus yelled at the watch on his wrist before lying back down with his hands behind his head. "This sucks."

Eri moved closer against Katsuki, scared at the sudden outburst.

"Is Boss mad?" she whispered while clinging onto Katsuki.

“Don’t mind him. He’s just a big o’grumpy cat when he’s sleepy.” Katsuki hugged her tighter. He kind of liked this. Kids had higher body temperatures so she was warm and soft. Holding her reminded him of the feeling he felt in the memories from the future.

His little Matilde.

Katsuki found it awkward to believe that he had a child in the future but the feeling of holding her in his arms was so real in his memories. A family. It sounded so absurd that he wasn’t sure what to make of it. He knew the future wasn’t set in stones but it made him hopeful. He wasn’t sure if he or Xanxus could be good parents yet he did crave for a family of his own. Maybe it was overcompensation, maybe he just wanted to prove to his parents that he could do it better than they could, or maybe he just wanted to show that love didn’t have to earned the fucking hard way every single second of the day…but he couldn’t deny that he was looking forward to the scene he saw in the memories.

He wanted people that wouldn’t walk away when he needed them. He wanted people who would take care of him, even if it was accompanied by a lot of threats and swear words or daggers.

Katsuki couldn’t guarantee that he wouldn’t need to leave Matilde’s side for work but he would make damn sure that she never had to wonder her worth.

And Xanxus…he wasn’t the best of a spouse or candidate for Best Dad of The Year but he would take care of things. He *always* took care of things. Xanxus wasn’t Katsuki’s father, who always stood in the shadow of his wife and only came to offer nice words once the storm was over. Xanxus had a spine and he could always pull Katsuki back if his head was off to the wrong place. This man was the sky that kept Katsuki grounded in reality but never suffocated him or made him feel restricted. The sense of security was everything that Katsuki longed for.

If he was going to start a family, he did want it to be with this man.

Ducking to avoid the pillow being thrown his way, Katsuki picked Eri up and went towards Xanxus. Eri was tugging at him, trying to get him to go back but he only smiled at her.

“Boss might get mad…” she mumbled quietly. “Mr. Squalo said we shouldn’t bother Boss when he’s sleeping.”

“Sometimes it’s okay. You will learn what times are okay when you’re a little older. Don’t try this on your own though.” Katsuki sat down on the sofa. It was big enough that even if Xanxus took up the majority of the space, there was still a bit of room left even if it was a tight fit. The sofa was comfortable and cushioned, while it wasn’t as comfortable as the bed, it was still like sitting on a soft cloud.

Katsuki placed Eri on top of Xanxus. Both the girl and the man stiffened.

“The fuck are you doing?” Xanxus asked in a raspy voice. He glared at Katsuki and Eri through half opened eyes and his piercing gaze made Eri immediately want to scramble off him. She would have fallen on the floor if it weren’t for Katsuki stabilizing her in place.

“Joining you for nap time.” Katsuki patted Eri on the back to comfort her and gently pushed her down against Xanxus’s chest. The girl was obviously not used to this kind of physical contact. It wasn’t like the Varia members were very gentle with children and they mostly moved her around under their armpits like she was an extra folder or by the back of her collar like a stray kitten.

Katsuki laid down too. It was a tight fit but all three of them were on the sofa. He laid his head against Xanxus’s collarbone while Eri laid on the man’s chest.

He knew that neither of them were really great people and they knew absolutely nothing when it came to raising kids…so what if they started now? What if he could get Xanxus accustomed to caring, even if it was just a little, for a kid now? Like, at least not yell at the kids too often kind of caring?

Eri was a little girl. Their Matilde will be a little girl too.

It wouldn’t hurt to try, right? Kind of like all those how to train your hubby shit that the magazines keep yelping about. The worst that would happen was Xanxus kicking him onto the carpets.

Also, it would probably do Eri some good to not be a shaking mess every time she had to talk to Xanxus. He wasn’t expecting the girl to be kicking ass at the age of six but she should at least be able to feel more comfortable around family members. Besides, if she could survive Xanxus, Katsuki was pretty sure she’d be fine in most situations.

Katsuki would also bet that Xanxus knew everything he was plotting

since he didn't bother hiding his intention at all. He saw the man glancing at him and Katsuki smiled as innocently as he could.

"Nosy brats," Xanxus grumbled but didn't bother moving a finger. He closed his eyes. "Be quiet or I'll toss you both out the window."

Keeping one hand on Eri, Katsuki stroked her hair softly. He could feel her calming down even if her muscles were still stiff. In a few minutes, maybe it was because she was still a kid and when she didn't perceive any threats, she managed to fall asleep. She looked peaceful when she was asleep.

Katsuki thought it was damn adorable.

Closing his eyes, he let his consciousness drift off into dreamland as well feeling satisfied with his first attempt at training Xanxus into parenthood.

"...I'm still here, you know?" Mammon complained quietly as they hovered in mid air. They saw everything from start to finish, and their jaw almost dropped when Xanxus didn't burn Katsuki and Eri for interrupting his nap. Xanxus couldn't really be comfortable sleeping under that weight but he didn't push them off, that alone spoke volumes. Mammon's little frog sat on top of their head and it croaked in agreement. "This is absolutely not Varia at all."

They took out a custom made miniature phone and aimed the camera at the three on the sofa. However, when they attempted to take a picture, Xanxus opened one eye lazily and the warning in his stare was evident even without words.

Mammon loved good black mail material and money but they also valued their life so with a bit of disappointment, they lowered their phone. "You're being too soft on them, Boss."

The illusionist never thought they would be telling *Xanxus* of all people that. They were also in the middle of a representative battle that could decide if Mammon could break their curse, being so relaxed and domestic was not logical at all. To be honest, Mammon hadn't seen Xanxus actively do anything since they got to Japan. Sure, the man went over some work and barked orders but the rest of the time he was mostly sleeping or eating. Mammon also had doubts about bringing the girl here. Katsuki they could understand but the girl was…well, they didn't think keeping her so close to the battlefield was the greatest idea.

But Xanxus was their boss and if the boss decided on something, Mammon did trust the man to pull through in the end.

Xanxus went back to sleep as if he didn't hear his mist guardian. He wrapped a hand around Katsuki too.

Mammon sighed and floated out of the room. Once they were down the hall, Mammon extended their hand to the frog on their head. It spat out a small camera and Mammon checked the footage.

Yep, got all three of them sleeping together on the sofa.

They could definitely sell this to Levi and get good money for it.

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"Voi! We're back, Boss!" Squalo's voice could be heard before he set a foot off the elevator.

Eri rubbed her eyes, still sleepy from the nap. She didn't really know what was going on. Mr. Levi suddenly said they were going back to Japan and Eri was worried they were going to give her back to Overhaul.

She started living in a hotel with the rest of Varia. Stain got her a coloring book and crayons, along with a few story books. There was a TV in the hotel room too so she spent her time with those. It wasn't that much different from when she was still back in the castle.

The food here was also good but Eri felt like the adults were busier than usual.

But Victoire was here.

Eri liked her very much. Victoire would braid her hair all pretty and hug her, pat her gently on the back when she was scared or talk to her normally. Mr. Squalo and the others talked to her too but they still scared her.

Boss was the scariest of them all. He rarely smiled but when he did, it was more like he was baring his teeth, like one of those big lions in the discovery shows Stain showed her.

He looked like he would eat her if she didn't behave.

Cook her and grill her over a fire too…kind of like in the stories with the witches that Belphegor told her. The prince was a mean one,

always trying to scare her.

Victoire was the only nice one.

Eri was also confused. She liked Victoire's hugs but she felt like her embrace was a bit…hard? Kind of rigid and tough and not as soft as the maids'. It felt more like she was hugging Belphegor instead, which was weird. Victoire was a girl wasn't she?

Boss kissed Victoire a lot and it always made Eri feel a bit giddy on the inside. The king kissed the princess. It was a real life fairy tale… just with a lot more yelling. She didn't know why she had to cover her eyes often when Boss was kissing Victoire though but every time she tried to ask, Lussuria would distract her with sweets.

One day, Lussuria came back with really pretty rings and they suddenly had a lot of pets! Boss and Victoire had really big cats that were scary but they let Eri pet the beasts. The animals had really soft fur and they looked like small mountains to Eri.

Eri loved it. She liked brushing their furs and patting them. They purred and nuzzled against her, which was fun and ticklish.

Bester wasn't a good option since Boss didn't like them touching Bester but Victoire always let Eri play with Cemani.

However, Victoire was kind of weird too. She liked Boss a lot and Eri didn't really get why she was trying to help her get closer with Boss. Eri was fine remaining unnoticed. Boss's attention wasn't a good thing. Anybody who caught his attention back in the castle usually ended up needing the doctors to heal an ouchie.

Eri didn't like ouchies. Or bleeding.

But she didn't dislike taking a nap with both Victoire and Boss.

Boss was warm and Victoire smelled like flowers with sugar, the same smell that the candles in Boss's office gave off when lit. She could hear Boss's heartbeat and feel Victoire's hand stroking her hair. It was a nice feeling that made her all fuzzily warm inside. Eri felt like she knew this feeling from somewhere before…before her daddy disappeared and her mommy left her with grandpa.

It made her feel safe even if Boss was still scary.

"Hey, kid, come eat." Mr. Levi waved her over and there were more

yummy foods on the table. Eri could see Boss already eating with Victoire at the other end of the dinning table. They were having spaghetti. The sauce on Eri's plate was white and creamy, and it smelled delicious.

Mr. Levi, Captain Squalo, Belphegor, and Lussuria sat down on the sofas not far from the dining table while Mammon floated down onto a small chair. They were talking about things that Eri didn't quite understand as they were talking really fast in Italian.

"So, to review," Mammon paused, switching back to Japanese. "In the ten minutes of today's battle, Boss said two things: When the watch went off he barked 'Shut up' at it like a demon and said 'This sucks' before going back to sleep."

The rest of the Varia men laughed.

"That's Boss for you," Squalo was laughing the loudest as he sprawled on the chair, one foot popped up to the table.

Lussuria coughed. "Can't be helped. The rules of this battle don't really go well with our boss's personality."

"Well, we'll take care of the enemies before the Boss needs to get up so don't sweat it." Belphegor hopped over the couch and sat down next to Lussuria. "So, what did the girl do today?"
Eri didn't expect her to be mentioned but she perked up. Hurrying to set her fork down, she tried to recount all the things she did today. "I-I…drew everyone?"

"Oh? Can I see them then?" Lussuria asked nicely.

"They're not really finished." But Eri still got the drawings for him.

Mr. Levi stared at the portrait of him for a second before blurting out, "I look like shit."

"Cause that's how your face looks naturally," Belphegor laughed while picking out his picture from the pile and then his smile froze. "...The prince *does not* look like this creep of smiles."

"Pfft, I'd say she captures your essence pretty well." Mr. Levi ducked a dagger flying his way. "What? You want a fight?"

"Bring it."

“Come on, you two. Little Eri tried very hard and no fighting in the hotel room,” Lussuria patted Eri on the head. “They are wonderful, Eri-chan～”

“Thank you,” she replied because that was the respectful thing to do but she casted her eyes down, embarrassed.

“What else did you do today?”

“...Um, I took a nap with Boss and Victoire-Nee?”

“You what?”

Oh, did she say something wrong? Everybody was staring at her now. Captain Squalo’s eyes might fall out of their sockets too…did she mess up again?

“Xanxus?” Captain Squalo scanned Eri and turned to Boss, who was still eating. “You let her do what? Who the fuck are you and what did you do to our shitty boss?”

“Shut up and wipe that dumb expression off your face,” Boss said while throwing a fork at Captain Squalo.

The silver haired man caught the fork and rubbed his nose. “Still our shitty Boss with his shitty temper alright…”

“Xiexiexie, did you do something, Princess?” Belphegor went behind Victoire and leaned against the back of her chair. “Reining Boss in for parenthood already?”

Mr. Levi’s eyes lit up but Victoire glowered at him. “I’m *not* pregnant, Levi. Sit the fuck down.”

Eri had never seen the giant man look so sad before as he mopped in the corner.

“We’re not getting a damn brat,” Xanxus stated.
Captain Squalo whistled. “Don’t make a promise you can’t keep, Xanxus. Fuck, you can hardly keep it in your pants.”

Lussuria coughed, a lot louder this time and Eri was worried he might be sick. “I’m sure you will be such great parents!”

“Isn’t this kind of like a baby trap?” Belphegor mused with a large grin on his face. “Boss you’re so doomed.”

“I said,” Boss growled, obviously displeased. “We’re not getting a snot nosed germ bag so all of you shut your mouths before I do it for you.”

“We’re not having a kid?” Victoire looked heart broken. She had tears in her eyes that were threatening to fall out and her lips sagged into a frown. She was still pretty even if she looked sad though. “I thought you loved me.”

Boss rolled with his eyes and let out an exasperated sigh while the rest of the men in the room were howling in laughter.

“Wait, don’t move.” Mammon aimed a camera at Victoire. “This expression is great material for your next post. People are going to be wondering what got you so upset.”

“Isn’t it a little fake?” Captain Squalo turned around fully. “What did you do to make yourself all teary?”

“Onions,” Victoire answered while pointing at the onion sauce on the side. “And that was a bad idea cause it burns.”

She fanned herself, trying to make the tears go away.

They were throwing more jokes in Italian again. Eri wasn’t sure if it was a good idea because Boss’s expression got darker with every snicker or cackle that came out of the men’s mouths.

“All of you, fuck off!”

Boss exploded.

“You lit that fire, you put it out!” Belphegor yelled at Victoire as he grabbed Eri and raced out the suite. Behind them, Boss was already tossing stuff at all of them but Eri didn’t think he was really mad. He was red on the face but not…furious? Like he normally got when he was angry.

All of this was still very confusing to her but she thought that maybe, just for a tiny second there, that Boss wasn’t such a bad guy after all.

Chapter End Notes

Finally got around to updating this one ٩(●◡●)۶

Hope you all enjoy a slightly more domestic chap

Chapter 24: Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Updating time!

Ah, also, heavy KHR Rainbow Arc spoilers!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Since it was a representative battle, they couldn't stay holed up in one place. That wasn't Varia's way of taking care of problems anyways. Squalo was the captain so he would bring the rest of the squad out to haunt other teams. Mammon and Xanxus usually stayed in the hotel to hold down their base. Actually, it was more because Xanxus didn't feel like moving around so Mammon stayed to watch (read: serve) him.

Katsuki usually stayed besides Xanxus. He liked spending time with his boyfriend and if he saw that Xanxus was in an alright mood, he'd take Eri over for "bonding sessions". Honestly, it felt more like he was trying to teach the kid how to move around a large carnivore without getting eaten.

"B-Boss, breakfast is ready." Eri's face was puffy and red as she gathered up the courage to tell Xanxus that the food was here. She stood at a safe distance, at least three feet away, and was ready to run. Katsuki also wouldn't have sent her if Xanxus was asleep.

Xanxus didn't even glance at her as he walked past her to get to the table.

Katsuki gave Eri a thumbs up and she deflated like a balloon, relieved that she got through that safely.

Since she was such a good girl, Katsuki decided he would take her down to the buffet area to pick up a few cakes that were freshly made. It was still within the hotel and Stain already checked that the Dino wasn't around so it should be relatively safe.

"Do you guys want anything?" Katsuki asked. Of course they could order room service but sometimes Katsuki still felt like it was more

fun to go pick out the things he wanted to eat in person.

Squalo waved his hand to signal that he didn't need anything and the rest of Varia gave pretty similar reactions. Katsuki went down as Victoire but he didn't need to be flamboyant so he picked rather plain clothing. Just a T-shirt and some jeans, plus a little makeup to go with his heart shaped earrings. He kept a baseball cap on too. The staff of the hotel were trained pretty well and since it wasn't tourist season, the hotel didn't have many guests.

Namimori wasn't a large town either so it was pretty quiet, which was a bonus.

Eri carried a candy apple to the table. She looked like she fell in love with it the second her eyes landed on the dessert. It was a full red apple drenched in a golden glaze of sugar and wrapped with a spiral of crispy dark chocolate and silver milk chocolate beads.

Katsuki watched her eat. They dressed her up differently too. Lussuria cut her hair to her shoulders and dyed it pink. Along with how they've been taking care of Eri, she packed some meat on her bones and looked nothing like the sketch the heroes had out for her. The Eri the heroes were looking for was a scared lab rat and the Eri in front of Katsuki right now looked like any other private elementary school girl in Europe.

The watch around Katsuki's wrist started beeping.

"You stay here with him," Katsuki said when he noticed someone outside in the garden. He gestured for Stain to come over from the next table and keep watch over Eri and to contact the rest of Varia.

Katsuki dialed for the mist division that was on standby as he walked into the garden.

"Hibari," Katsuki called. There was no way Katsuki wanted to do an ambush. He had been itching to fight Hibari fair and square and the feeling was mutual.

He wasn't surprised to see Hibari had come alone since they received intel that Hibari had attacked Tsunayoshi's group at school during the first day of the representative battles.

Out of a desire to fight strong opponents, Hibari refused to fight for Reborn. Instead, he went and became a representative for Fon, a Chinese martial artist who was cursed just like Reborn.

“Hello, it’s a lovely night for a battle,” Fon greeted Katsuki with a polite smile. In his baby form, he kind of had the same hairstyle as Hibari but his hair was longer and tied into a braid behind him. Dressed in a red tang suit, he sat on top of Hibari’s left shoulder while a small monkey was perched on top of his head. Instead of the yellow Arcobaleno’s pacifier that Reborn had, Fon wore a red one around his neck.

No wonder this was called the Rainbow Representative Battle. The pacifiers were in the colors of the rainbow.

Fon hopped down with his monkey and moved to the side just as the timer on Hibari and Katsuki’s watches started counting down.

Thirty minutes.

Hibari’s tonfas clashed with Katsuki’s dagger. The metal scraped against each other, sending small sparks flying between them. Katsuki swung his right hand and set off an explosion, which Hibari dodged by bending backwards. A kick came at the side of Katsuki’s head, forcing the blond to leap back and put some distance between the two of them.

“Finally getting serious?” Hibari asked. He was still quite bitter about Katsuki previously refusing to fight with his explosions because it violated the law.

“Why do you think we took the mist division with us?” Katsuki quipped. “This time it’s different.”

Namimori wasn’t a large city and most importantly, it was under Hibari’s influence. Beside the Disciplinary Committee that was directly under Hibari’s rule, his family also had deep connections with all the sectors of authorities in Namimori. Combine that with the few hero activities around the vicinity and Vongola pulling a few strings in the dark, people remained oblivious to the mafia chaos. Or else Tsunayoshi and his friends would have been arrested by heroes long ago.

Since they had a good reason for fighting this time, Katsuki wasn’t going to hold back.

Hibari smiled but it was one painted in the familiar bloodlust that Katsuki knew all too well.
They clashed again. Katsuki stabbed Hibari, only to be blocked by the chain extending from the ends of the tonfas. Seeing that, Katsuki set

off a flash grenade but even with his sight temporarily blinded, Hibari was still able to dodge Katsuki's kick. The end of the chains shot out and wrapped around Katsuki's right wrist. With a pull, Katsuki flew forward towards Hibari.

Boom!

When the dust from the explosion settled, Hibari had a slash on his left upper arm and Katsuki was missing his cap and gained a bruised rib.

"Voi! You shouldn't be starting without us!"

Squalo's voice came along with Bel's daggers. The silver knives were deflected off the metal tonfas and embedded themselves into the concrete road and Katsuki saw Hibari's smile grow wider.

"Stay out of it!" Katsuki yelled. He wanted to fight Hibari alone.

"Ushishi, we didn't take a shortcut just to watch you fight." It was easier to scale down the side of the hotel than to use the stairs or wait for the elevator. "And the Prince doesn't like the Bird kid."

They had a little verbal altercation when the ring battle was happening.

"It's like the African Savannah here," Hibari said with a smirk. He was obviously thrilled about the situation. "I can bite you all to death at the same time."

And Hibari was one who could make good on his words. He turned his head to avoid Squalo's sword while also blocking Lussuria's punch with his tonfas.

Levi suddenly yanked Katsuki back as the teen attempted to join the battlefield.

"What the fu–" Katsuki stopped abruptly when he saw the monkey holding a red pacifier in the trees. Ducking for the ground, Katsuki heard the cracks of electricity and saw the exploding light from the corners of his eyes.

And then Levi flew into a tree.

Lussuria yelled, "Levi!"

"I'm out!" Levi coughed. His watch was broken. "He's coming your

way!”

Lussuria’s knee jerked up as a blur of shadow rushed him. Katsuki barely had time to blink before he saw their sun guardian go down.

“Luss!” Squalo clicked his tongue when he realized Lussuria was unconscious and out of the battle because his watch was also smashed.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Hibari barked angrily.

“I can’t just stand by and let you be ganged up on,” Fon said calmly. He was no longer a baby. Instead, a man close to Squalo’s height stood there. Katsuki wondered briefly if Fon found Hibari because they were related somehow because their features were nearly splitting images of each other. They had the same thin lips, narrow eyes with long lashes, and similar bangs that fringed their faces. “Let’s finish this quickly. The gift of turning back to my real form is only temporary as granted by Iron Mask.”

“Move. I can do this myself.” Hibari shoved Fon away.

“That would not be ideal.” Fon looked up. “Incoming.”

A burning ball of fire was fast descending, causing everybody to scatter. Katsuki remembered to grab Levi while Bel took Lussuria out of the danger zone. The garden went up in flames in an instant but since it was the Flames of Wrath, it basically disintegrated the trees and walkways.

“Fucking boss, watch where you’re aiming!” Squalo stretched his neck and screamed. Xanxus landed on the ground beside him while Mammon also floated down.

“Boss, that’s Fon. Don’t listen to anything he says. He likes to keep jabbering on about stupid stuff, like lecturing me about how I deal with my money,” Mammon complained loudly. Katsuki hadn’t seen them this expressive for anything besides money and breaking their curse. “He also disses on my illusion a lot so I don’t like him.”

Katsuki kind of felt like he was watching a kid tattling to their parents about encountering a mean bully on the playground. He must be imagining things because of the illusionist’s young appearance and squeaky baby voice. .

Xanxus’s expression was dark, which Katsuki assumed was because this battle disrupted his meal. “Mammon, shut up.”

“Sorry!” Mammon quickly got out of Xanxus’s way when he heard the safety of Xanxus’s other gun coming off.

Xanxus glanced at Hibari and Fon, then the battle started without any further conversations. The key to a high speed battle was just that: Speed. At first, he could still keep up with the attacks and coordinate with the rest of Varia against Fon and Hibari but then Fon’s movements changed.

In the midst of hearing the sound of gunshots and metal scraping against metal or the noise of the edge of someone’s clothing flipped through the wind, Katsuki started noticing that he and Bel’s watches were being targeted by Fon. Hibari was all focused on Xanxus and Squalo, since they were stronger but Fon was a different story, while occasionally helping Hibari out of a tight spot, he was aiming his attacks towards the two blond teenagers.

Katsuki pushed his speed up with his explosions while Bel covered his blindspots with his daggers. Within an instant, Katsuki flew over to where Squalo, Hibari, and Xanxus were fighting. Grabbing Hibari by the back of his collar, Katsuki tossed him into the woods on the side that survived Xanxus’s first shot.

“Bel!”

A rain of daggers showered down on Hibari. Hibari lifted his tonfas and while he managed to block the first round of daggers, his movements quickly stopped. Thin, razor sharp threads were all around him, if he moved carelessly, he would be sliced. Of course, they didn’t expect it to hold Hibari for long. Katsuki fired off an AP shot at Hibari and then throttled forward immediately as he felt Fon’s presence closing in. He stepped on one of Bel’s threads. It might be sharp but it wasn’t impossible to navigate, otherwise even Bel wouldn’t be able to use them in a fight. Katsuki weaseled his way up and over, down and under through the threads while continuing to fire at Hibari. Being as experienced as Fon was, the threads didn’t slow him down much and Hibari was already taking down the trees around the area and going after Bel, preventing the prince from being able to set more traps.

Xanxus’s fire blasted through the rest of the woods, forcing the four of them to separate.

Squalo cursed when his slash didn’t finish Fon in one strike.

“I think I’m getting used to how this body works again,” Fon said. He took off his shirt, revealing the muscles and a dragon tattoo that

wrapped around his left arm. There were a few small cuts on his skin but the air changed around him.

Katsuki summoned his box animal out of a looming premonition of danger.

“It’s finally getting interesting.” Hibari also called out his box animal. It was a little porcupine, which Katsuki was sure the design was on purpose because as much as Hibari loved fighting, his patience for tiny animals (not the human kind) was surprisingly stable.

Katsuki saw Xanxus’s liger and Squalo’s shark out as well.

“I can see why Mammon placed their trust in you,” commented Fon. Sighing, he raised his arms and lowered his center of gravity, ready for an attack. “Normally, I’d like to enjoy a fight but we’re a little short on time.”

The cursed babies could only turn back to their original forms for a short period of time during the battles.

Fon vanished.

Before Katsuki realized it, Bel’s watch was smashed. Katsuki only narrowly protected his watch with Cemani’s help of turning the space around him into a landmine zone with the firepower of Howitzer Impacts. Fon was in the middle of gunning for Squalo’s when Mammon hadn’t stepped in.

The illusionist requested for the gift of turning back to their true form too. Mammon was short, probably not even as tall as Katsuki and everything about them was still shrouded by the darkness of their cloak. A few strands of long purple hair could be seen underneath their hood.

“I have implanted a mental bond in your minds.” Mammon spoke slowly, placing emphasis on their words. “Anybody who had doubts about winning shall die. Those whose confidence in victory waned shall receive an equal amount of damage to their physical bodies.”

Spitting out a mouthful of blood but he didn’t look surprised at seeing Mammon interfering.

Bel laughed. “That’s cool but Mammon’s still short, even shorter than the Princess.”

“Get out of here, Bel. You’re useless without a watch.” Mammon waved him away. “And this technique applies to everybody still on this battlefield, you’re just going to get hurt unnecessarily.”

It affected *everybody*? Katsuki had no doubt in his faith for Xanxus winning and he was sure the same went for Mammon.

“Kyouya wouldn’t lose a fight of will,” chuckled Fon as he called Hibari by his first name. Well, Katsuki supposed these cursed babies were at the age of god-knew-how-old-they-were so it was normal for the old geezers to use first names with the younger generation.

So this fight was down to the battle between the Arcobalenos.

Mammon and Fon both dispersed into the night wind like they were made of sand. Katsuki turned his attention back to Hibari since he would be no help for a fight between the strongest martial artist and the strongest illusionist.

Hibari met Katsuki’s gaze. “So it’s down to the monkey king and queen?”

“Who the fuck are you calling a monkey?” Katsuki absolutely took that personally. He was *offended.* Victoire was an international sensation and the hottest teen idol out there! She was a princess walking straight out of a fairytale. He didn’t put in all the work just to be compared to an ape!

“Piece of shit.” Xanxus raised his gun.

It didn’t feel like a lot of time had passed. One second Katsuki was fighting Hibari with Xanxus and then the next thing he knew, Fon and Mammon both showed up bloody. Fon turned back to his baby form first and Mammon summoned ice to freeze Hibari in place.

“Finish him, Boss!” Mammon yelled.

Katsuki smiled when he saw the heat gathering in the barrel of Xanxus’s gun. Only, he felt something wrapped around his waist that yanked him back, throwing him towards the wall and when Xanxus’s shot was fired, it missed.

“I can’t let Kyouya lose just yet.” Dino walked closer to them with a whip in his hand. “He’s my student and Reborn said I should help him if he’s in trouble.”

Mammonwas pissed. They coughed while blood still dripped from their cloak. “It doesn’t matter, Fon’s out of the game and we still outnumber you. Boss, let me–”

“Shut up, injured ones need to fall back,” Xanxus ordered.

Katsuki placed a hand on Mammon’s shoulder, stopping them.

“Boss wants to fight alone,” Bel commented with his usual carefree smile. Honestly, he just wanted to see the world burn in Katsuki’s opinion.

“I can win without help.” Hibari frowned, directly his displeasure at Dino.

“No, Buckling Horse is right on this one.” Fon went to grab his pacifier and shook his head at Hibari’s statement. “Xanxus hasn’t gotten fully serious yet.”

Katsuki didn’t like the way things were going. He wanted to fight Hibari too but he wasn’t the one wearing the boss watch. Knowing Xanxus, he’d order Katsuki to sit this one out so he could fight Hibari alone too.

Dino took a step back as if he had given up on convincing Hibari. Instead, he said, “Fine. I suppose Xanxus isn’t as strong as they make him out to be since he lost to Tsuna.”

Shitty goddamn fuck.

Katsuki’s jaw went slack and he saw the shivers went down both Mammon and Bel’s spines. Squalo cursed out loud as his face paled. It was the stupidest way of riling someone up but Katsuki knew his idiot boyfriend would fall for it.

Patches of dark frostbitten scars appeared over Xanxus’s body and his ring lit up in the red hue of his flames. “Bester!”

The liger merged into Xanxus’s guns, customizing the guns with a design of lion’s mane and wider caliber. Katsuki grabbed Levi and Lussuria and tossed them both at Bel as they turned to make a run for it. The flames coming out of Xanxus’s guns morphed into Bester’s shape, claws and fangs made of blazing fire disintegrated everything in their path, even blowing right through Hibari’s porcupines that he amplified in numbers with his cloud flame.

As they ran, Katsuki tossed a grenade full of his sweat at Dino's direction, causing the blond to scramble and duck for cover.

When the dust settled, they went to check on the result of the battle.

"Shit, Hibari's fine?"

Technically, Hibari wasn't fine. His uniform jacket was gone and there was dust and burnt marks on his shirt. Some blood was also smeared over his face as he knelt on the ground.

Xanxus also had one knee on the ground and blood was seeping from the back of his left hand.

Fon had a smirk on his face. "Xanxus had to change the trajectory of his attack last minute to protect his watch."

"Don't be so quick to celebrate," Mammon sneered and pointed at Hibari's empty wrist. "Hibari lost the boss watch!"

Katsuki whistled and Cemani crawled over, in her mouth was a half chewed broken watch.

"Good girl!" Katsuki laughed as he threw himself at his box animal. Her fur was a little stinged but otherwise she was fine. Giving Hibari and Dino the middle finger, he kept laughing. "You lost!"

It wasn't the one-on-one victory that Katsuki wanted but as long as they helped Mammon get closer to breaking the curse, Katsuki was happy.

Not Hibari or Xanxus though.

"I told you to stay out of it, brat," spat Xanxus angrily. He didn't say anything but he expected his men and Katsuki to know what he wanted.

Katsuki stuck out his tongue at him. "I didn't say anything about you blasting at Cemani too!"

Fon took the loss surprisingly well though. Besides the initial shock, he remained calm. A loud beep came from the remaining watches to signal the fight was over too.

"I suppose it can't be helped. The allocated battle time is over too," Fon sighed with a bit of regret.

“I’m not satisfied,” Hibari said after a moment of silence. “The battle for the watch is over but I want to keep fighting. Why would I let a watch decide when I should fight anyways?”

Upon hearing that, Xanxus started laughing. “You actually make some sense.”

Katsuki grabbed onto Xanxus immediately. “Xanxus, no!”

He knew his shitty boyfriend all too well. Xanxus was going to keep fighting until he and Hibari settled things. That would be a waste of energy and they already destroyed a garden, as competent as the mist division was, they better pack it in.

“Let go–”

Pulling Xanxus’s head down, Katsuki gave him a deep kiss to distract his stupid boyfriend. The kissing and hugging seemed to repulse Hibari and his desire for a fight wanned significantly.

Katsuki heard the Italian adults whistling and afraid that Hibari and Xanxus were going to go strong at it again, he dragged Xanxus towards the hotel.

He had no intention of doing more than kissing with Xanxus though, not when they needed to get the wound on Xanxus’s hand checked out. And he also had a little girl to collect too.

—---

They were back to the top floor hotel suite. Lussuria woke up and he healed them with his sun flames. Before they could go wash up, Checker Face or Iron Mask or whatever the guy’s name actually was, spoke through the watch.

An eighth team now joined the representative battle.

The Vindice, the mafia’s own sort of law enforcement, was under the command of an Arcobaleno with a transparent pacifier and now they want to break their curse too.

Katsuki thought it was kind of odd how Checker Face didn’t invite all of the Arcobalenos to the battle. Instead, the Vindice attacked the Simon family, who was representing Skull, the Arcobaleno with the violet pacifier. Then they took the watches and joined the battle.

Mammon didn't know about the existence of an eighth cursed baby or an eighth type of black flames. Him and the rest of the cursed babies decided to meet up and discuss the situation and to check on Skull, who got sent to the hospital along with the rest of the Simon family.

This night really wasn't a peaceful one. Katsuki and the rest of Varia's high executives were barely settled down before all of them felt the ominous aura of dark flames sputtering to life. It was like watching the wrap gate villain showing up at USJ again, except that instead of mist, it was black fire.

Katsuki tossed two of his grenades through the fire without thinking. The black flames looked like it glitched for a second and the sound of explosions was cut short as it vanished.

Bel turned to look at Katsuki.

"What? I've been wanting to do that." He would have done it to the villains coming out of the mist back at USJ if he didn't have to follow hero rules. The nitroglycerin concentration in these grenades was extra potent after all.

Black flames lit up in another corner of the room but Katsuki didn't toss any more grenades. Their opponent would be expecting it this time so him throwing any more would be useless.

"Vindice." Squalo's sword was ready. "Today's allocated fighting time is over already. What are you doing here?"

The person emerging from the flames didn't answer him. Instead, Katsuki dived for the floor as the chains came. The metal clattered against each other as it expanded out like spiderwebs towards all of them.

Katsuki rolled towards the window and hopped out of it. The rest of Varia scrambled too as the whole room got consumed in a sea of bright red flames. One shot from Xanxus took out the entire top floor of the hotel. Glass exploded and concrete burned, melting pipes dripped down the remaining floor as pieces of furniture were blown away.

"Is he dead?" Levi asked while they dangled from the edge of the window a floor down.

They climbed back onto the top floor. Levi opened his umbrella, blocking the whip made of heavy metal chains. Green sparks of

electricity transferred from the umbrella to the chains, zapping towards Vindice.

Their attacker wore a tall hat and a dark cloak. From the build and height, he might be a man but Katsuki couldn't tell for sure because every possible exposed skin was wrapped in old bandages.

Katsuki threw his dagger but Vindice moved his head back and dodged it smoothly. Bel's dagger hit the end of Katsuki's dagger as it was flying by and an explosion went off, blasting Vindice in the face.

All of Katsuki's Varia daggers were custom designs. He liked them long to extend his reach and sharp for more efficient killing. Also, just like his gauntlets, there was a special design on the handle that could collect his sweat. His cloud flames amplified his sweat production and allowed him to replicate his daggers in numbers.

A new pair of daggers appeared in his hands and he charged into battle.

Squalo slashed at Vindice while Bel went at the latter with a hailing storm of daggers. Katsuki found opportunities in between to throw more explosions at their opponent. Together, they forced Vindice into a corner and they all backed away when Xanxus fired a shot. The flames scorched the ground and hit Vindice directly. Combined with Katsuki's sweat, the explosion was enough to take out another floor of the hotel if they hadn't driven Vindice off the edge.

Squalo suddenly slammed forward while a chain wrapped around his sword. Multiple chains shot out from behind him, attacking all the Varia members and Levi stabbed Vindice with his knee, who had escaped the explosions.

"Squalo!"

The swordsman got back up again but his watch had been destroyed.

Vindice's cloak and hat were burned off along with portions of his bandages, revealing ashen skin that looked so dry that it rivaled a mummy.

"Whoa," Bel whistled but his laughter that followed felt strained. They were fighting a physically enhanced zombie with a creepy eight type of flame that burned cold but was just as furious as Xanxus's wrath flames.

Tossing one of his daggers off the edge, Katsuki raced towards Vindice. The man attempted to move back but his body suddenly froze in place like his muscles had turned to stones. Katsuki took the opportunity to explode him with maximum firepower at close range. It blew him back, charring his skin but Katsuki could tell the man wasn't incapacitated just yet.

"Stain!" he ordered. If Vindice didn't want to fight according to the rules, neither do they. Come to think of it, the rules never prohibited attacks from non-representatives outside of the battle times.

The hero killer appeared at the edge of the roof. When the fight first started, he had taken Eri and hid between the carved stone decorations on the side of the wall. A moment ago Katsuki tossed his dagger with Vindice's blood on it to Stain and that was how they managed to freeze Vindice's motion with Stain's quirk.

Stain threw Eri at Lussuria and came down on the Vindice with a large blade. He missed. Vindice rolled away during the last second, leaving only a trail of black fire that seemed to drown out all the light.

Katsuki felt the force slamming into him and his body flew backwards. The chain wrapped around his torso and a pull smashed him towards the ground. Coughing, he felt like his lungs were being pushed out of his chest and his body felt numb as the dark flames licked his skin.

"Boss! Please retreat!" Lussuria tucked Eri close against his chest as he dodged the chains narrowly. Vindice was really just attacking them all with the intent of killing them.

"Who the hell would retreat?" Xanxus's voice didn't contain the same bite as it normally had. Blood dripped down his forehead and Katsuki wasn't sure if Vindice got his boyfriend's right eye too.

All Katsuki remembered was the seething fury emitting off Xanxus before he passed out.

—---

Katsuki woke up with his head rested on Xanxus's lap. The hotel room looked like it had been put back together but he knew this was just an illusion. His wounds had been treated but he could still feel a dull ache in his limbs and if he moved too fast, the pain turned sharp and his breathing hitched.

"Xanxus?" He called for his love first. They were on a long sofa by the

window and judging by the position of the moon, it was close to midnight. Xanxus had fresh bandages over his right eye and he looked tired.

Xanxus grunted as a response. His boss watch was still intact so they must have protected it well. Looking down, Katsuki saw that his watch was perfectly fine around his wrist too.

“Shit, this hurts like hell.” Levi’s voice came from across the room. Pushing himself up, Katsuki saw four beds over there. Bel, Lussuria, Stain, and Levi were all lying down, obviously injured even worse than Katsuki was. Mammon had returned from their meeting and was pacing in the air, mumbling about something so quietly that Katsuki couldn’t hear them. Eri was wetting a towel and placing it on Stain's forehead ut she looked unharmed.

“Stop complaining,” Squalo barked from the chair beside them. He was cranky as he pulled the last watch from the box. “We got a spare and since I’m the healthiest out of all of you right now, I’m putting myself back in the fight.”

“At least let Eri-chan fix up Boss or you a bit then,” Lussuria groaned.

“No,” Xanxus rejected immediately.

“Boss, now’s not the time to play tough guy!” Mammon was panicking. “I’m doing the best I can and really am trying! Please use the girl as we need to be at top condition if we’re going–”

“Mammon.” Xanxus’s voice took a dip below freezing but it wasn’t the usual tone he used when he was pissed. Instead, Xanxus actually felt calm. “It’s just a few more trash that we have to take out.”

The sureness in his voice eased the tension in the room. Mammon looked like they had more to say but they didn’t appear as frantic now. Katsuki laid back down, feeling Xanxus’s fingers raking through his hair. He closed his eyes and tried to get some rest.

And then the clock struck midnight and theiir watches started beeping again.

“One minute until battle starts.”

Chapter End Notes

I got some fluff planned for next chapter. Also, after this we can

move onto Xanxus meeting class A and jealous Midoriya :)

Chapter 25: Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

Happy Happy Weekend Everybody!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Fighting one Vindice was a pain in the ass and fighting three of them at once was an even more grueling task.

Katsuki wasn't sure how they got through that one. Even with Mammon's help, twelve minutes felt like an eternity and he just remembered blasting off one explosion after another until his arms felt like they were going to fall off. His cloud flames were depleted greatly as he had to continue to use it to replenish his dagger supply and to use Cemani in their fight.

The elemental flames were a form of life energy and just like stamina, they weren't endless.

When the time was up, Vindice retreated.

The belt on Katsuki's watch was broken but he shielded it at the last second with his other hand so the watch itself was fine. Squalo, who was more of a close range attacker, was covering for both Xanxus and Katsuki so he wasn't as lucky. His watch got smashed again.

Later that day, as they were still healing from the fight and anticipating another off the record ambush from Vindice, Fon brought them news from Reborn.

Checker Face didn't plan on making good of his promise that he would undo the victor's curse. In fact, this whole battle was a tournament for him to select seven people who would become the next Arcobalenos. The Arcobaleno pacifiers, Vongola rings, and the Mare rings that belonged to Byakuran were not just jewelry or a symbol for the mafia. They were actually the stones that anchored this earth, a pillar of this world's existence in fact. However, the pacifiers held too much power and they were unstable, thus they needed to be linked to someone with strong flames to keep them from self destruction.

If the pacifiers were gone, this world would also wither.

The Arcobalenos were human sacrifices, cursed to remain in their baby forms as their flames would be channeled into the pacifiers. And then when the next seven sacrifices were selected, the existing Arcobalenos would die upon removal of the pacifiers.

Mammon was absolutely losing their shit over this. Katsuki was silently panicking on the inside too. Only two paths were laid out in front of them, if the next Arcobalenos were chosen then Mammon would die. If he didn't, he would be turned into one of the Vindice by taking on the black flames of vengeance and become a zombie soldier under the control of the eighth Arcobaleno, Bermuda.

Tsunayoshi came up with a plan to save the seven cursed babies. The brown haired teen visited Varia late at night and early morning the next day, all of the representatives from each team gathered at Tsunayoshi's house.

He wanted to gather up those who could still fight within all the teams and launch an assault on Vindice. They'd separate the avengers with their dark flames and take them down individually. Tsunayoshi, Basil, and Enma of the Simon family had the greatest mobility so they would be flying around the battlefield to take down Vindice members as needed. Katsuki Out of all the Vindice fighters, there was one called Jaeger who had the teleporting ability. He was probably also the strongest, since Tsunayoshi confirmed it after exchanging blows with him.

"If Xanxus is fighting this Jaeger guy then I'm going with him," Katsuki announced while they were sorting out who was going to which location during the battle with Vindice.

"No, you're not. Give me your watch." Squalo ordered.

"No!" Katsuki jumped back to avoid Squalo's hand. He hid the watch behind him. "This is my fight as much as it is yours! And you're hurt more than me. It makes more sense for me to go."

He didn't care if it was embarrassing to be bickering with Squalo like a kid throwing a tantrum in front of outsiders. Katsuki wanted to be there for Xanxus and Mammon. Also, Squalo was already injured and even though Katsuki was as well, he felt like his fire power would be more useful in large range attacks.

"Um…Bakugou-kun and Squalo, please calm down–" Tsunayoshi tried to stop them.

Squalo shoved him aside and raised his voice. “Screw that! You’re not even an official executive.”

“I have the cloud ring!”

“The more reason why you should listen to me then. I’m the captain!”

Glaring at him, Katsuki knew there was no way he’d be able to convince this stubborn man.

“Xanxus!”

“Boss!”

They both turned to the man in charge, waiting for Xanxus to settle the matter.

“Shitty shark take the watch and come with me.” Xanxus crossed his arms in front of his chest. His red eyes landed on Katsuki. “You go with the trio of scums to clean up the rest of the zombies.”

Squalo snatched the watch from Katsuki and his expression was pretty much an “I told you so”.

Katsuki gave him the finger and threw himself onto Xanxus’s back, leaning all of his weight down on the man to show that he wasn’t happy with the decision.

“So clingy, Katsuki-kun.” Byakuran laughed as he opened a pack of marshmallows.

Katsuki merely rolled his eyes at him. Truth be told, he didn’t have a good feeling about this plan of theirs and being in close physical contact with his boyfriend made him feel better.

Before they had to go to their assigned positions, Xanxus grabbed Katsuki and they shared a kiss.

Katsuki might not have shown it but he felt the pressure building inside him. It felt like they were constantly under attack and suddenly everything was being balanced on a thin wire of life and death. As much as he tried to not let the insecurities and horrible thoughts sliding down a slippery slope of doom get to him, Katsuki was still feeling it.

The passion from the kiss burned away the nervousness that was gauging at Katsuki’s heart. Strong arms encircled him and the familiar

heat was grounding.

He wasn't alone. His sky was still here to hold him up.

"Kill them all," Xanxus said quietly when their lips parted.

Katsuki nodded while a feverish blush dusted over his normally pale cheeks. He was in such a good mood that he didn't care about the stares from Tsunayoshi and his friends. The group of middle school boys felt awkward while the Italian adults didn't even care.

Well, actually, Dino muttered something along the lines of how that kind of looks illegal but otherwise he didn't seem particularly concerned either.

Katsuki didn't have high hopes for mafias and their ethics anyways.

Using his explosions and cloud flames, he propelled himself through the air while Tsunayoshi and the others flew with their own flames. Katsuki already knew about Tsunayoshi's sky flames, Basil was Tsunayoshi's father's disciple and while he wasn't a sky or a guardian, he could activate a flame of dying will with the aid of some pills. Enma had the flames of the earth, a type of flame that gave him the ability to control gravity. It was different from Round Face's quirk, which only let her make things lighter.

Their plan was working.

Katsuki watched as Tsuna and Basil dealt the finishing blow to one of the Vindice that Gokudera and the rest of Tsuna's friends had been stalling. He wouldn't say the battle was an easy win but something about how smooth things were going that made Katsuki nervously twitchy.

"I'm going to check on Reborn's side." That was where Xanxus and Squalo were. Katsuki didn't know what made Reborn so special that Bermuda targeted him directly but he didn't have time to fully question it. "You three go on and finish the job."

He was breaking formation but he couldn't stay here any longer. There was a worm inside his chest, chewing away at his heart and nerves that made him feel like his chest was being carved out, emptied until there was nothing left.

Katsuki didn't wait for a response before he took off. He flew past the tall trees that surrounded Namimori and landed at a plaza. When he

got there, he saw a Vindice man with long wavy hair attacking Xanxus.

Without thinking, Katsuki moved in front of Xanxus and unleashed a blast that rocked the ground.

Coughing, Katsuki looked down and saw a slash across his chest. It sliced through his shirt, leaving a thin line of red over his chest. Thankfully it didn't cut deep.

Xanxus was missing his right arm. Katsuki smelled burned flesh and sweat mixed in the heavy scent of blood. He didn't have time to check on Xanxus's wounds because his eyes landed on Squalo. Squalo was on the ground with a hole in his chest and he didn't respond to Katsuki calling his name.

His box animal leaped over to Squalo's unmoving body. She licked the blood off his face and then a feral growl escaped her throat. Cemani roared, venting out all the pain and anger that Katsuki was feeling. The purple cloud flames around her body expanded, spinning around a ring of black metal that appeared around her body. Multiple daggers were attached to the ring, forming a spinning wheel of death that was definitely too lethal for hero standards.

There was only Jaeger here but he already took down Squalo, Byakuran, and took one of Xanxus's arms. Katsuki felt the anger exploding inside him when he saw the eighth Arcobaleno. The one that shouldn't have existed. Bermuda wore a similar outfit like the rest of the Vindice; a top hat and a cloak along with a body wrapped in bandages. He was in his baby form and he floated off Jaeger's shoulders.

Katsuki went after them.

Explosions throttled him forward while Cemani launched an assault from the right. As the jaguar raced towards their enemies, more rings of spinning daggers appeared to block any possible escape routes for Jaeger.

Katsuki bombarded Jaeger with explosions while cornering Jaegar with his cloud flames and spinning blades. Xanxus shot at Jaeger every time he tried to teleport out of Katsuki's attack range. Meanwhile, Mukuro and Dino went after Bermuda.

Of course, taking down the strongest Vindice wasn't going to be that simple. Katsuki was forced to pull back in order to dodge Jaeger's

counter attack. The man was a silent fighter and he could short wrap only parts of his limbs to different places for sneak attacks. After a few minutes, Katsuki had slashes all over his body. None of them were fatal wounds but they stung and the combined blood loss was making his head dizzy.

Jaeger still had his chains. It wrapped around Katsuki's rings of daggers and he slammed it all back into Cemani, pushing her into a stone statue in the plaza. The box animal howled as it got buried under the stones and metal.

"Katsuki!" Mammon's warning came too late.

Blood gushed from Katsuki's right shoulder and Jaeger appeared in front of Xanxus. Jaeger's hand wrapped through the wrath flames and touched Xanxus.

"Xanxus!"

Varia's boss was down. Blood seeped pooled beneath him as he laid face down on the ground. Katsuki's sweat dripped onto the ground, leaving dots of stain marks on the concrete.

"Katsuki! Stay calm!" Dino yelled over the chaos.

"I'm mad fucking calm," Katsuki gritted the words through his teeth. Standing up, he panted as his body wavered. Ripping off a piece of his shirt, he tied it around his injured shoulder. "Pineapple freak! Cover me!"

"Don't order people around, *Princess*." Mukuro spat the last word in a mocking tone. His breathing was uneven too because even if Jaeger was fighting Katsuki, it didn't mean he didn't target the others simultaneously. They had to be careful since they never knew where the man's chains could appear from next.

The battlefield smelled of ashes and blood, along with the burnt caramel scent that always lingered after Katsuki used his quirk.

"Keep the fucking zombie baby away from this asshole." Katsuki noticed Bermuda was landing on Jaeger's head or shoulders occasionally. It didn't make sense. They could be showing off that they were so much stronger than Katsuki and everybody else combined so they could take things leisurely but the frequency didn't make sense.

Something was off.

And Katsuki's battle instincts told him to keep the two apart.

"You're just struggling futilely," Bermuda said in a dark voice. "Finish them, Jaeger."

Jaeger's chain whipped around him, using brute force and the black flames to blitz through Mukuro's illusion decoys. He came directly for Katsuki and didn't hold anything back. Katsuki dodged the first kick but he couldn't escape the chain. Something must have broken in Katsuki's right arm because he could feel the excruciating pain that made his brain blanked for a second. An explosion was set off between him and Jaeger, which sent Katsuki flying back because he couldn't keep himself steady any longer in his state.

Hibari's appearance stopped Jaeger from finishing Katsuki off. Dino used his whip to pull Katsuki to the side, away from the battlefield. Tsunayoshi and Enma joined the fight at that moment. Katsuki saw them coming in like bullets and Enma slammed Jaeger into the ground by manipulating gravity. Mukuro yelled at them about Katsuki's suspicions.

Katsuki made his way over to Xanxus, leaving a trail of blood behind him.

"Xanxus? Xan?" Katsuki whispered while turning his boyfriend over. Xanxus's eyes were closed and his lips look pale as chalk. "Please wake up."

He could still feel Xanxus's heartbeat but it was weaker than usual. The adrenaline still pumped through Katsuki's veins and he knew Mammon must have attempted first aid on Xanxus and Squalo but he couldn't shake the looming fear.

Katsuki picked up Xanxus's gun. He pulled the bullet that he always wore around his neck off and loaded it into the gun.

"Get out of the way!" he yelled.

One shot was fired. It hit one of the daggers Katsuki left behind on the ground right next to Jaeger and it set off a chain reaction of explosions. Bright, blazing flames engulfed half of the battlefield.

Jaeger moved no more.

But Bermuda was still alive.

“Present please,” the eighth cursed baby said into the watch he took off Skull.

There was no longer a baby there. Instead, Bermuda’s true form looked like a teenager. He was naked from the waist up and he looked oddly thin, with disproportionately large hands. His hair was black and spit down the middle while his eyes were large like a cat’s.

Tsunayoshi engaged him in battle.

Katsuki left the rest of it to Tsunayoshi and the others. With the help of Dino’s men who were waiting on the sideline, they rushed all the injured to the hospital. He also ordered for Stain to bring Eri to him. The hero killer was using crutches and he limped his way over with Eri walking slowly beside him.

The boss and the captain were both out of commission. Mammon couldn’t leave because they were an Arcobaleno. Levi, Lussuria, and Bel had no objections (or rather, they all suffered different degrees of injuries and someone needed to stay with Mammon) so Victoire was the one in charge.

Katsuki pulled Xanxus’s jacket, which he picked up from the battlefield, tighter around himself. It was too large on him and it felt extra heavy because it was soaked in blood. The strong scent disgusted him but he couldn't let go of it. His fingers were trembling as he kneed down in front of a confused Eri.

“Eri,” Katsuki said softly. He was trying to stay in character for Victoire but it was so hard to keep his voice steady. “Do you like living with Varia?”

“Yes,” the girl answered quickly despite the worry in her eyes when she saw Katsuki’s state. She had gotten faster at answering since most of the Varia members had short tempers. “I-It’s a little scary sometimes but I like the castle and the big room with the big big windows.”

“Do you like Xanxus and everybody else too?”

She was silent for a second before looking up at Katsuki with wide eyes. “Bel-Nii gives me apples but he’s scary when he throws sharp things at me. Mr. Luss is nice to me but I don’t like his room. Captain Squalo yells a lot and he gives me a lot of homework. Mammon

doesn't like talking to me. Mr. Levi took me away so I don't get cut up any more. And Boss…he has very warm hands, like Daddy used to have."

Eri held Victoire's hand. "…I think I like them. I like you too. Are you okay? Did Boss hit you like he hits the others?"

"No, Eri. He didn't. But another bad man did. The bad man hurt Xanxus and Squalo too." Katsuki guided her towards the surgery room. "They are hurt and they need you. It's time for you to be useful now. You can be a good girl and do that for us, right? Help them make the boo boo go away."

He really hoped this would work.

2

Namimori Hospital was rather rowdy today.

Tsuna went to check on his friends, who were healing from the battle with Vindice. Dino and Basil were required by the doctors to stay for a few days so their conditions could be monitored. Since they didn't want to crowd a hospital room, it was decided that Tsuna and Reborn would go see them first while the rest of their friends waited.

The fight with Bermuda ended with Tsuna's victory. In order to avoid being selected as the next Arcobaleno, Tsuna offered a different solution to Checker Face, who was actually one the last of the "real Earthlings" that had guarded the world's foundation since the beginning of time on earth. He wasn't an evil man who took joy in watching people suffer and he only needed human sacrifices in order to keep the pacifiers stable. The pacifiers needed a continuous input of flames running through them or they would break.

Tsuna proposed that if they could create an infinite loop of flames, like electricity locked in a closed circuit, then that would solve Checker Face's problem. Bermuda and the Vindice hated Checker Face for turning them into what they were but they offered to use their flames to regulate and ensure the circuit was maintained.

They came to an agreement.

Checker Face lifted the curse on the Arcobalenos. However, they didn't turn back into their adult forms immediately. Their bodies would now gradually age and grow like normal people did instead.

“Room 203…” Tsuna muttered while checking the room tags. When he turned around, he almost fell on his bum because of a menacing face that suddenly encompassed his field of vision.

“It’s Levi from Varia,” Reborn said.

Looking closer, yep, it was indeed Varia’s lightning guardian. Tsuna wasn’t too familiar with the man but he could see Levi looked out of breath. He already was scary looking and now his twisted features only made him look more like a demon...but a happy demon? “What are you doing?”

“Boss sent me to go back and forth to the food stand 50 times.”

That was ridiculous. What kind of inconsiderate and heartless prick would make a patient still in recovery do that?

Xanxus apparently.

Levi opened the hospital room’s door and Tsuna looked inside. He saw Mammon sitting on top of Bel’s head and a small table with tablecloth that had the fancy lace around the edge. Different kinds of fruits and croissants, along with tea served in a China set were on top of the table. Meanwhile, Lussuria was in a pink apron and sitting between the small table and the hospital bed. Squalo sat at the edge of the foot of the bed with a book in his hand.

“Here, Boss. It’s the filet steak you love,” Lussuria cooed as if he was trying to get a toddler to have a bite of brussels sprouts. He even had the steak cut up into bite sizes already and was going to feed it to Xanxus.

Xanxus, who was lying in bed, turned his head towards the window to reject the food. Tsuna wasn’t even surprised when he saw how the Varia boss had half a dozen pillows to make the hospital bed more comfortable.

“What a selfish patient,” Tsuna muttered. Leave it to Xanxus to demand a hospital stay to rival a five star hotel…still, this seemed excessive. Also, he was pretty sure the reason why Xanxus was so entitled was because his subordinates were indulging all of his unreasonable demands. Nobody got the guts to say no to him and those who do just roll with whatever he wanted cause that was easier to deal with.

“Voi, if you’re looking for Buckling Horse then he’s in the next room

on the opposite side." Squalo pointed out the door. He wasn't yelling today, which was kind of a surprise to Tsuna.

"Squalo, is it alright for you to be out of bed already?" He heard that the older swordsman survived even though he had his heart pierced but Tsuna didn't think any human should be moving around a day after sustaining such a wound.

"Mammon replaced his heart with illusions instantly after it was pierced," Reborn hopped onto Tsuna's shoulder. He stared at Squalo with a bit of curiosity behind his eyes. "How long will you be needing the illusion heart?"

"Ushishishi, until we can find one for transplant of course," Bel replied as if that was the obvious answer, which it was but Reborn still looked thoughtful.

"Is that really still necessary?" The baby hitman pointed to the corner of the room, where a little girl was sleeping on the single sofa. Eri (Tsuna looked her up after their last encounter) had a blanket over her as she slept soundly. "Isn't this why you kept her, Xanxus?"

Xanxus turned his head around and met Reborn's eyes. Neither of the two said anything.

Tsuna looked at the girl. "What is going on?"

"Squalo's heart is already healed," Reborn said in a monotone.

"Eh?" Tsuna glanced at the man and then back at the girl. Reborn said that the yakuza were using Eri to make quirk canceling bullets but apparently there was something more to it. If Eri really did heal Squalo then…Tsuna gulped. He wasn't very politically savvy or into conspiracy theories but even he knew a quirk that could fix a man who had his heart destroyed was worth more than gold, just look at Recovery Girl.

"You did your research," Squalo gruffed and he put his book down. The rest of the Varia members in the room were all staring at Reborn and Tsuna, which made things very uncomfortable.

"Of course I did."

"Got a problem with it, trash?" Xanxus's expression didn't change. The scars on his body didn't expand either and he wasn't reaching for his gun, which Tsuna took as signs that things might not escalate.

“Not exactly,” Reborn chirped, “but I certainly hope you know what you’re doing.”

Okay. Tsuna didn’t dare breathe. It was probably time for him to try to say something. They just finished fighting the Vindice and he had no intention of starting another battle with Varia, in a hospital of all places. “I…um, where’s Bakugou-kun?”

If he went to find Bakugou, maybe that would give him half a chance of getting out of here alive. The hero student wouldn’t just stand if Varia actually tried to murder Tsuna. Or at least, that was what Tsuna was hoping.

“Katsuki is right there.” Lussuria gestured to the lump beside Xanxus on the bed, which Tsuna thought was just a collection of pillows and blankets. Katsuki was asleep and curled up right next to his boyfriend, with one hand holding onto a strand of Squalo’s silver hair.

Tsuna wasn’t sure if he saw right but the edges around Bakugou’s eyes were a bit red, like he had been crying.

“He won’t let go,” Squalo grunted.

Levi clicked his tongue. “Kid’s been like gum stuck in his hair for the past hour.”

An hour? Did that mean Squalo sat there for an hour just because Bakugou wouldn’t let go? That was weird. Tsuna would have imagined the swordsman yelling to wake the kid up so Bakugou could release his hair.

Well, both Squalo and Xanxus were in critical condition and Bakugou was close to them both so…oh god, Varia did have a heart after all?

“Fucking say a word and I’m going to turn you into sashimi,” the swordsman hissed.

Tsuna immediately backed away and made sure he kept his mouth shut. He even tried thinking about all the homework he had to do since he missed class to keep the smile off his face.

The wall behind Bel and Mammon suddenly cracked open and Byakuran was hovering in the air. Behind him, the rest of his family were also there.

“I thought I heard Tsunayoshi-kun～” Byakuran smiled.

“The fuck are you doing messing up other people’s walls?” Squalo cursed at him.

“I don’t want to walk all the way around. It’s tiring.”

“Get out.” Xanxus’s order came along with a blazing hot bullet. Tsuna ducked to the ground as Byakuran dodged and the fire melted the wall on the other side of Byakuran’s room.

Before Tsuna could get up, he felt metal flying past his hair and a long chain wrecked the wall on the opposite side of Xanxus’s room, shooting into the next room.

Hibari, who was in his pajamas, pulled out his tonfas as two dozen Hibirds scattered out of his room. “I’m going to bite you all to death for interrupting my sleep.”

“Where did you even find all these Hibirds?” Tsuna scrambled towards the door because he didn’t want to be caught right in the middle of this mess. Who in the world thought it was a good idea to put all of these people on the same floor of the same hospital anyways?

A girl’s scream came from the side that Hibari destroyed. “You made me spill my ice cream!”

Tsuna recognized the girl with short orangish brown hair as M. M. and she worked with Mukuro. Mukuro’s gang was also in the room and Fran was staring at Mukuro’s head with a horrified look on his face. Hibari’s chain had almost cut off a portion of the pointy part of Mukuro’s hair.

“Even you got sent here?” Tsuna groaned. Seriously, who thought bringing them all here was a good idea? Namimori had more than one hospital about the same distance apart!

“Since all of your rooms are connected now, why not have a pillow fight?” Reborn suggested with a small smile. Tsuna wanted to smack him but he would never have that courage.

“We should have a spear fight instead, make it bleed.” Mukuro pulled out his trident.

“White dragon.” Byakuran laughed and the serpent-like dragon appeared around him.

“Let’s do some shooting,” Xanxus said and he already had his gun out

with his finger on the trigger. Hibari was silent but it was more than obvious that he was the most eager for a fight.

“Waitwaitwaitwait!!!” Tsuna was in such a panic that he couldn’t even speak properly. “You want to fight here? This is a hospital!”

“Tsuna, what’s going on here?” Dino and Basil stood at the door to Xanxus’s room and Tsuna finally felt like he found some sane people. He was going to run over to them but a dagger stabbed into the ground right in front of his extending foot. Whipping his head around, Tsuna saw that Bakugou was awake and he had one hand on Xanxus’s wrist to stop the man from shooting.

“All of you shut the fuck up and play nice. Nobody’s fighting here today.” Bakugou was smiling but it was Victoire’s smile. It was so sweet and pretty that it just felt so horribly displaced to the point where it was unnerving, like finding a singing doll in a haunted hotel. He had another one of his long daggers with the glistening blade in hand. “Or I start emasculating **each and every single one** of you, we clear?”

Tsuna felt a chill straight from his crotch that made him want to squeeze his legs together in order to protect his private part. He noticed that all the males who were present also took a step back, even Xanxus’s eyebrows flinched slightly.

They were used to fighting but it wasn’t everyday that they received very explicit threats towards their genitals. Fighting somebody was very different from fighting somebody whose *sole goal* was chopping off their penises.

“Good.” Bakugou nodded as if pleased with the reaction and laid back down, tucked the blanket over his stomach before closing his eyes. He was clinging onto Xanxus like the man was a body pillow.

Silence took over the atmosphere. Tsuna was pretty sure Bakugou would make good on his promise if anybody stirred up trouble again.

“...Um, so why don’t we get you all into new rooms?” Dino coughed.

Tsuna had never been happier that there was at least one reasonable adult in this crowd of lunatics.

—---

Lussuria left Xanxus and Katsuki alone in a new hospital room.

“Mama Luss will be back soon~” He was in one of his happy fantasies again as he wandered off to talk to the doctor about some of the medical things that they needed to be cautious about. Eri’s quirk was useful but Xanxus and Squalo weren’t the only ones hurt.

Katsuki was on Xanxus’s left side and he laid his head on Xanxus’s chest. Katsuki was careful to not lean too much of his weight on Xanxus. Eri rewinded both Squalo and Xanxus’s bodies to before they got fatally injured but even before then, the two assassins still fought other battles and depleted their stamina.

Sniffling, Katsuki buried his face against Xanxus’s collarbone. He already cried once when he saw that Squalo and Xanxus were alright. And hey, if anybody wanted to give him shit for it, he’d shove Levi in front of them. That man also cried when he saw that his boss was still breathing.

Actually, Levi might be the real MVP here since he was the one who got Eri in the first place. Fucking hell. Katsuki never thought he’d see the day where *Levi* deserved praises instead of a kick to the arse.

“I ain’t dead,” Xanxus grumbled.

“Shut up and let me be sentimental.” Katsuki would have knocked Xanxus on the chest but he couldn’t bring himself to do it, not when the image of his boyfriend bleeding out on the ground was still so fresh in his mind.

No words could describe how he felt when he saw both Squalo and Xanxus lying in a pool of their own blood. He really thought he had lost his lover and family and Katsuki couldn’t take the heartbreak.

He knew he shouldn’t be doing this. He told himself that this was a possibility whenever he and Xanxus (or anybody in Varia for that matter) was apart. Death was a possibility. They were elites in what they did but that didn’t mean they were invincible.

Katsuki was prepared for it.

But he still couldn’t wave the images from his head. He watched the man who had been like an older brother to him laid in a hospital bed with tubes and monitors attached to his veins while a fake heart kept him just an inch out of death’s door. Silver and red, the colors were a blur in his vision but Katsuki felt like he had been dropped into a blizzard.

And then he saw his lover. Blood dripped from the melted skin around where Xanxus's right arm had been sliced off. Xanxus must have burned himself with his flames to stop the bleeding and the raw crimson burned into Katsuki's heart like someone had shoved piping hot coal against his chest. There was blood coming from Xanxus's knees too and Katsuki couldn't even speak. Scars, so many scars. The old ones wrapped around Xanxus's exposed skin like thorns while the new ones marked his skin, each wanting to carve itself bone deep.

He could hear Levi pacing nervously in the waiting area and Bel stopped smiling beside him. Lussuria was using his sun flames to speed up the recovery process while Mammon kept the organs of illusions working.

Drips and drops, the sound of chemicals flowing into their bodies and the digital noises of the monitors made Katsuki agitated. He didn't like those sounds, they sounded like the church bells counting down to a funeral. The hospital smelled like disinfectants and blood being rinsed down metal pipes.

He hated every second of it.

Katsuki hated that he almost lost the people he cherished the most and that he was too weak to prevent them from getting hurt. His brother, his mentor. His lover, his boss. They were almost gone.

The wave of despair waved over him, nearly drowning him.

But everything was alright in the end. He didn't lose his family.

"Stop using my shirt as tissues."

Katsuki felt a large hand landing on his back. It was colder than usual but still warm and familiar. The room was starting to be filled with orange and gold, a parting gift from the setting sun before it completely disappeared behind the horizon. Katsuki could smell the gunpowder on Xanxus and the hospital shampoos because no one had the energy to care for such trivial details last night.

He didn't want to let go since he was scared that all of this was just a dream. He was scared that if he let go, the man in his arms was going to turn to a puddle of bubbles and foam made of blood.

Xanxus's hand moved to the back of Katsuki's head. "Why did you tell the brat to heal me first?"

Eri's handle on her quirk was still unstable. It was incredibly lucky that she had been able to rewind both Squalo and Xanxus back just the right amount of time. They had an estimate of how long she could use her quirk but it wasn't certain.

Squalo's injuries were greater than Xanxus's, even with an illusion for heart, every second was dangerous for him. But Xanxus was the boss, no matter what happened, he should be the priority.

Katsuki ordered for Xanxus to be healed first.

"Because you are the boss."

It went against everything Katsuki learned in his hero course or even from a general first aid class. Lives shouldn't have value assigned to them and when it comes to treatment, they should help the more critical ones first. If they were still under threat or on the battlefield, then healing Xanxus first would be the best choice. But the battle had ended and there were no immediate threats, having their captain back on his feet was the option with more payout. Xanxus could still do his job without a right arm but Squalo couldn't without a heart.

That wasn't relevant here though.

It had nothing to do with Katsuki being Xanxus's lover either. It was simply because the Boss should always come first. Varia gathered under Xanxus because he was Xanxus. They could wait eight years for him to defrost but it would be a different story if Xanxus wasn't coming back.

Squalo prided himself in being Xanxus's sword. He was the captain of Varia and Xanxus's right hand man, an essential member to their team but he wasn't the boss. If anything was to happen to Xanxus because Squalo was treated first, Squalo would have never forgiven Katsuki and most importantly–he would never forgive himself.

The swordsman would rather give his life for Xanxus and if Katsuki went against that, it would be tainting his honor. This wasn't like the ring battles because this time it involved putting their sky at risk.

A guardian's job was to protect the boss.

An element could be replaced but the heavens was one and only.

Katsuki could see out the window from his angle. The clouds looked like they were on fire. His hand found Xanxus's right hand–the one

that had been sliced off and fixed–and Katsuki locked their fingers together. He could feel his boyfriend's pulse underneath the heated skin. There was fire burning in those veins and Katsuki felt a slight tremor.

It was fear.

A well hidden fear was buried deep, shrouded with the familiar wrath that promised to set the world ablaze. It was the lingering fear for what could have happened, of the what-ifs and the worst case scenarios. Katsuki wasn't even sure if Xanxus could recognize that emotion as what it was since the man was so emotionally constipated.

"How much longer will you be staying in Japan?" Katsuki asked, trying to change the subject and take the attention away from the uncomfortable subject. He was bad at emotional reconciliation or talking about feelings and all that. Not to mention, it wasn't like Xanxus was going to admit he needed to chat about such things. Both of them were alive and that was enough.

"Until the end of the week," Xanxus answered. Katsuki wondered briefly if Xanxus knew that he was avoiding the subject but he supposed they both could use a lighter conversation.

That was too bad. Katsuki had to go back to school tomorrow so he wouldn't be able to spend more time with his lover and family.

Xanxus raked his hand through Katsuki's hair. "You got something to say?"

"Just the usual," Katsuki mumbled. "Don't bully Squalo and everybody else too much. Don't drink too much. No destroying the castle just cause you're in a shitty mood either."

"That's not what's on your mind."

Okay, Katsuki didn't know why Xanxus was pushing this conversation back into the uncomfortable zone. He studied his boyfriend's expression for a minute or two before determining that he had a safe pass to go all out today without this turning into a shouting match. Playing with fire was a dangerous task. Reach too far and he would get burned, stand too far away and it started to turn cold. Katsuki wanted to touch Xanxus's heart but those opportunities were rare, more often he merely received tolerance to be close.

But at least that was a start.

Propping himself up onto his elbows, Katsuki stared into his boyfriend's red eyes.

"You almost died," Katsuki pouted and he felt the tears starting to gather behind his eyes. "You can't do that without my permission. I'm going to explode your ass if you scare me like that again."

Xanxus pinched his cheeks and grunted but didn't retort Katsuki. Katsuki took that as a sign to continue.

"I don't like that you always keep things pent up or how you keep putting on the tough guy act even when it's just the two of us. I lied when I agreed to our Barcelona plan and I actually really want an engagement ring and a wedding and a honeymoon somewhere in the Americas after I turn eighteen." Katsuki kissed Xanxus, leaving a trail of kisses. He had already been to plenty of places in Europe and while he was interested in the Asian countries, they might run into people that knew his parents. Africa might be a good choice too but the hot temperature would be like adding fuel onto Xanxus's disastrous temper. Katsuki's quirk would also be much more active when the weather was hot and that was just a recipe for trouble. "It doesn't have to be a big wedding, we can just have Superbi and the rest of the crew. Eri can be our flower girl."

He'd only call Squalo by his first name a handful of times before and it was usually reserved for more intimate family occasions.

Katsuki wanted to be a hero but he also wanted a family. He was working on his first goal but he already had the second. Sure, it was one that might be a little deranged but beggars can't be choosers.

"Aren't you just a greedy bitch?" Xanxus huffed.

"You said to tell you what's on my mind so I'm giving you straight. I also want to hear you tell me that you love me all sappy like in the movies."

It would be hilarious to hear a *Ti Amo* from Xanxus but also, Katsuki really wanted to experience the normal things that normal couples had. No gunshots or secrets in the dark that came with whiffs of blood. No cameras or flashy glamors either. Katsuki didn't expect Xanxus to have a complete one eighty on personality for the rest of their lives, but just for a short period of time he wanted to be spoiled and loved the way that normal people loved. He wanted to feel the devotion being reciprocated, with verbal validation and all the sweet stuff that made people feel like they had been stuffed into a jar of

honey or floating over clouds made of cotton candy.

“Next you’re going to want me to get chocolates every Valentine's Day and thoughtful gifts on anniversaries.” There was pure scorn and disdain in Xanxus’s voice.

“I won’t be complaining if you do once in a while,” laughed Katsuki. “A few nice words would do too. Come on, please?”

Katsuki tried to put on his best puppy eyes. He felt a slap on his butt but it didn’t sting. His boyfriend was oddly compliant and calm today, which made Katsuki feel all giddy inside like there were butterflies inside his chest. It was stupid honestly. He wasn’t some lovestruck fool but he was acting like one.

Xanxus pulled Katsuki closer, pushing the blond’s head down. His lips ghosted over the edge of Katsuki’s ear. There was no sound but the movements of the man’s mouth on Katsuki’s sensitive earlobe told a different tale. Katsuki’s smile grew wide when he made out the first word that was forming on Xanxus’s lips–

–And then his boyfriend shot the ceiling.

“Who’s there?” Xanxus demanded in his usual cold fashion.

Reborn dropped down and landed on the foot of the bed. He was amused and Katsuki swore that he could see a mischievous gleam of evil in his eyes. “Ciaos, I heard nothing.”

Of course he didn’t. But he must have seen it.

“Oh fuck you! Stop spying on people!” Katsuki threw the pillow at Reborn. He leaped off the bed and fished a dagger out to stab the hitman. “You ruined the moment! Do you know how hard it is to get him to soften down? He really is a stupid clam!”

Reborn dodged the dagger and hopped out the window. Katsuki wanted to scream to vent out his frustrations but he knew he’d never catch that weasel so he slammed the windows shut and locked it, pulling the blinds down too. When he was done, he stomped back to Xanxus.

“You’re not going to say that again, are you?”

Xanxus just sat up with a smug smile on his face and Katsuki swore he was going to grind some Carolina Reapers into Reborn’s coffee one

day.

One day.

Chapter End Notes

okay, finally finished the arc with so much fight scenes LOL. Now I can focus on dramaTM and playing with Class A!

If you got any suggestions of how the Xanxus meet Class A (or any other hero you want) should go, please throw them my way ;)

Chapter 26: Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Fatgum was patrolling the neighborhood when he spotted the man. Now, he wasn't prejudiced or even interested in policing how people dressed. Considering that his agency was located close to the busy downtown area of Esuha City, Fatgum was used to seeing wild party crowds. Not to mention, besides the pubs and nightclubs, there were also plenty of subculture stores that kept the streets here buzzing with people during the day as well.

He saw a wide variety of styles on a daily basis. There would be office workers in suits or teenagers running around in jeans and T-shirts. More often he would see the college kids with their school hoodies or night pub workers in skimpy but sparkly dresses depending on the time of the day. Punk, cosplay, goth, western vintage…he was pretty sure he had seen a fusion of them all.

The man in question wasn't actually wearing anything overly eye-catching or deviant. Black leather pants and a dark green shirt, his hair was spiked up with a lot of gel like a punk rock star. He also had multiple silver piercings on his face and besides his height, he didn't really stand out from the crowd.

Something about him just irked Fatgum the wrong way though. Maybe it was how even though the man was smiling, he just looked like a thug from head to toe and people steered clear of him. Honestly, he might not be the ugliest man there was but he had that creepily disgusting air about him.

Fatgum didn't want to be biased. He didn't see the man actively doing something inappropriate or causing a scene. The guy was just shopping. He got a hot dog from the food truck and paid without disturbing anybody. His eyes didn't linger on anybody for inappropriate times nor did he attempt to hit on anybody.

There wasn't any reason for Fatgum to be suspicious…all except for the little girl besides the man. She looked pretty young and she was a small girl. Light pink hair that fell to her shoulders, she was dressed

like one of those western dolls with her white lace blouse and dark blue skirt with silver embroideries of butterflies. She also wore black socks and a pair of polished round toe shoes.

To Fatgum, she appeared nervous and apprehensive of the crowd, almost as if she wasn't used to being out in the streets. She walked in front of the man with the piercings and kept turning her head around to make sure he was still there.

Fatgum thought it was a bit strange because they looked nothing alike and they weren't talking to each other. And the girl just looked so lost that he couldn't help but go over to check on them.

"Hey Mister," Fatgum said to catch the guy's attention. The man didn't run and he didn't look surprised at being called out by a hero. Instead, he stuffed the rest of the hotdog into his mouth and raised his hands to the air.

"I didn't do anything."

Fatgum stepped in front of him, eyes narrowing in suspicion. "I didn't say you did anything. Why would you assume I stopped you to accuse you of something?"

"Look at my face," the guy deadpanned. "Heroes, cops, mall security… it's not the first time I've been stopped because they think I am suspicious. You know, it's not my fault that I was born with a face like this."

Okay, Fatgum kind of felt bad for him now. It was unfair to be judged by appearances and this guy clearly had been mistaken a lot. Still, he couldn't blame the others for doing their jobs.

"Sorry but I have to ask, is this your daughter?" He pointed to the girl who was trying to hide herself behind the man.

"No," he answered easily without any nervousness or discomfort in his voice, "she's a colleague's niece actually. I have to take care of her because everybody else is busy and my superior thinks I'm her nanny."

"I couldn't help but notice that you only got food for yourself?" Fatgum knew most of the time it wasn't something serious. Not all kids wanted to eat all the time and if people were taking care of other people's kids, some would be more cautious of feeding them street food.

“She just had a happy meal and one whole candy apple. I’m not supposed to feed her any more stuff until dinner.” The man looked irritated now. “She’s going to throw up in the car if she has any more.”

A happy meal wasn’t enough to satisfy an adult but for a kid this young? Yeah, that was normal. Fatgum didn’t have children of his own but he had seen others interacting with them. He also was just a hero passing by and he wouldn’t know if the guardians of the girl had given the man a set of dietary restrictions to follow. Allergies were serious business!

“Levi, what is going on?” Another man came over. Fatgum thought he looked like one of the drag queens from the nightclub around the corner. Or at least, he had that similar air about him. This man was lithe and he had a bright green mohawk. He wore a pair of sunglasses on and a purple shirt with a bright neon pink fur shawl. The way he walked was feminine, almost as if he was on a red carpet or on a catwalk. In both of his hands were a bunch of shopping bags though. “Oh my, did you get stopped by a hero again?”

The man with the piercings, Levi, rolled his eyes before turning his attention back to Fatgum. “He’s another of my colleagues. Are you done here?”

He must have gotten asked that a lot too because his answers felt really practiced. Fatgum wondered for a second what kind of jobs they did. Maybe a performer and a security detail? Or maybe some kind of tattoo artist, punk fashion seller, and the likes. Given Japan’s work culture, Fatgum didn’t think there was a high chance they were regular office workers. The two of them did look foreign enough so maybe they were tourists just visiting for the short term too.

“May I speak with the girl alone for a second?”

Both of the men nodded. Fatgum led the girl a few steps away and bent down as much as he could in his large form to greet her.

“Hi, I’m the pro hero Fatgum. What’s your name?” He smiled softly, trying to not scare her. Fatgum was well aware that while he had a round and very huggable form, his large body sometimes also intimidated children.

“Er-Erienne,” she answered quietly and she didn’t meet his eyes.

Fatgum decided to cut to the chase. “Do you actually want to go with

them?”

She nodded enthusiastically. “We’re going home.”

There was nothing wrong with her answer. She actually looked relieved to be going home and Fatgum nodded. By the looks of it, all three of them were foreigners and the girl was taken care of relatively well. There were no odd limping or bruises that Fatgum could observe and Erienne was wearing good clothing that was both branded and appropriate for the weather. Her cheeks weren’t sullen and there was a healthy look to her skin, unlike the slightly yellow or deadly pale discoloration that Fatgum had seen on malnourished children before.

So he let them all go.

“Let’s go, darling.” The man with the mohawk ushered Erienne into the waiting car gently. “We can’t keep everybody else waiting.”

He was loving and caring, talking nicely with the girl and he was polite. Fatgum also saw a few sundresses for little girls and a toy castle in the shopping bags. They were all the latest hot sellers that Fatgum knew the housewives around the area all wanted to get their little girls one.

As their car sped away, Fatgum felt like he was missing something extraordinarily crucial though. Something about the girl reminded him of something but he couldn’t quite place his finger on it.

“Fatgum,” Amajiki’s voice came from the communicator in Fatgum’s ear. In order to train the UA third year to be more comfortable doing patrol alone, they have decided to split up and go around the block separately. “Is something wrong? I’m already at the converging point.”

Fatgum was supposed to meet him at the crossroad ahead.

“No, I’m coming. Everything is good.”

2

Kacchan came back to school looking elated.

Midoriya could see the happiness radiating off the blond the second he walked through the dorm doors. The blond had an extra bounce in his step that would have been missed by the untrained eyes but Midoriya had been observing his childhood friend since they were little. He knew. He knew what the tells of when Katsuki was happy

were. Kacchan had always been light on his feet but now he was like a cat strolling leisurely back home after gaining a proud kill. However, there were a few bandages and band-aids on his exposed skin. His right arm was also in a sling.

He didn't curse at anybody as a greeting and he tossed a large box of what looked like Italian chocolates at Bakusquad, saying it was a souvenir.

"What happened to your arm?" Kirishima asked, more concerned over his friend's injuries as he passed the chocolates to Kaminari.

"Encountered a shitty villain. It's mostly healed, the sling is just the doctor's reminder to not move it so much for a couple of days."

Oh, and now Kacchan was even explaining things. Midoriya wondered what happened to set the blond in such a good mood. He wasn't the only one who noticed it now either. Most of the class was here as well, spread out over the different corners and doing their own things. Some were in the open kitchen, making a bite of light snacks and getting drinks while others studied together at the tables. They all turned around to listen in on the Bakusquad's conversation since everybody was curious about how foreign heroes operated.

"How was your internship?" Mina practically leaped over to the sofa closest to Kacchan. Her eyes were sparkling with excitement. "What kind of place did you live? Who was the hero that hosted you?"

Since Katsuki's internship was out of the country, he was too far away from UA's protection. Thus, the destination and other details of his internship hadn't been disclosed with the class. They didn't get a lot of text messages from Katsuki during this period either. Midoriya supposed it was normal. When he interned at Sir Nighteye's agency, he couldn't be blabbering all about the operations and when things got busy, none of them had the time to be on their phones. They were there to learn and become better heroes after all, plus the time difference must have made it harder to text or call.

"It was alright." Katsuki shrugged. "They got a room at the back of the office so they let me stay there. The hero that hosted me called herself Twelve. The rest is just normal stuff, the job's the same overseas. I'm going to bed."

Their classmates didn't keep Katsuki long since they could understand how exhausting internships were. Midoriya didn't approach Katsuki either, knowing that the best he would get was probably an "out of

the way" or just a short grunt as acknowledgement.

Sometimes in Midoriya's dreams, Kacchan would respond to him differently.

He had nights where he would see the blond teen come knock on his door. Soft face glistening with a soft hue of silver under the gentle moon, the blond would look at him with a rare and serene calmness swirling within those ruby eyes. Heated fingers touched Midoriya's hand, sharing the warmth with him while they both drowned in the sweet lullaby of endearment and adoration for each other.

That would never happen in real life. When the dream ended and reality pulled him back, Midoriya didn't see himself in Katsuki's eyes. Katsuki always kept people at a distance. He had followers that he led but never anyone whom his eyes lingered on. His gaze was always focused on something far away, somewhere out of reach.

Midoriya wasn't really sure when the fall out started. They used to be good friends when they were babies. Katsuki would come over to his house and they'd watch All Might videos all afternoon or he would visit the Bakugous' and eat sweets together. Midoriya used to share all his secrets with Kacchan and the one who got to see him smile so brightly whenever Aunty Mitsuki praised him.

And then they just drifted apart. Katsuki got his powerful and flashy quirk then his focus shifted away. He no longer spent time with Midoriya and his temper got shorter whenever Midoriya tried to speak with him.

Midoriya had hoped that highschool would be different and it was. The normal mocking stares were gone and his classmates were no longer cruel, laughing about how he was quirkless right in front of him. His teachers weren't impatient with him and they tried their best to accommodate Midoriya's odd quirky habits that his old teachers would have reprimanded him for.

He was seated behind Katsuki, so much closer to the boy that he admired for all his life. Midoriya was familiar with watching Katsuki be amazing from afar. He was used to just being the wallflower or one of the cheerleaders as Katsuki accomplished one goal after another. Seated behind Katsuki was the closest Midoriya had been to the blond.

And he couldn't help but notice a few things.

Kacchan's hair was wild but they looked surprisingly soft. His waist

was also much more slender than Midoriya imagined. A few times while in class, Midoriya caught himself pondering about how it would feel if he could reach out and ran his finder along the curve of the blond's spine.

It was a dangerous thought that Midoriya kept private.

There were other thoughts that he kept private too, refrained from writing them down in his diary notes and too scared to even share it anonymously on some locked blog on the web. These were things that he only dared to express towards the Katsuki in his dreams, thoughts and feelings that he knew only a fantasy would entertain.

He dreamed of beach side strolls while holding hands and gentle kisses under the sunrise. Midoriya wanted to enjoy a cup of hot cocoa with the boy he loved under the mistletoe and exchange words of love during late night study sessions. Midoriya never wanted anything fancy, a short and quiet "I love you" alone would make him over the moon with joy.

Midoriya always had a lot to say. Besides the rambling when he got too focused on his studies and heroes, he also had been harboring a lot of things he wanted to tell the boy he had a crush on. He had so many sweet nothings and compliments that he wished he could tell Katsuki. Sometimes he imagined Katsuki to playfully banter and tease him back with sappy lines ripped off of magazines and other times the other teen would blush. That would be a sight *only* for Midoriya's eyes.

The only woe was that none of that could transfer into reality.

Midoriya wondered if Katsuki knew the power he had over people, even when he wasn't trying at all. The boy was magical and beautiful but also cruel. His presence lured people in like the sun with his radiance and mercilessly burning anybody who got too close. Yet, Katsuki never noticed, never stopped for anyone and that aloofness only tormented his admirers more.

They knew they couldn't have him but still, like moths to a flame, they gravitated towards him regardless.

It went without saying that Midoriya felt a flare of jealousy when he saw how other people were getting close to Katsuki. He had nothing against their new classmates. Everybody in Class A had been nothing but kind towards Midoriya and he would never wish any of them ill. They were his friends and they were amazing people, all working hard

like Midoriya and Kacchan as they chase their common dream of becoming the best pro hero they could.

Except that Midoriya was having a hard time digesting the fact that other people, like Kirishima, were earning Katsuki's friendship. He simply couldn't understand it properly. The idea of Katsuki having close friends just seemed so…foriegn to him.

Midoriya liked Kirishima and the rest of the so-called Bakusquad though. He loved how energetic and positive they were. They were sociable and always able to lift the mood of a room while also making people feel easy around them. He was just confused about how easy Katsuki allowed them to get close, and tolerated their goofiness. Kacchan didn't ignore them like they were extras nor did he keep them at a distance as he did with his middle school followers. Katsuki talked with them, even chuckled a few times at their bad jokes.

Which made Midoriya wonder why *he* wasn't enough. Kirishima and the rest of the crew have only known Kacchan for a few months while Midoriya had been there his whole life. Why were his efforts ignored and spat on while theirs welcomed? What was the difference between them?

They had a quirk and Midoriya had one too now. He tried so hard and for so long but he still couldn't be as close to Katsuki as they were. It wasn't that Katsuki hated him either. The blond felt nothing for him, which pained Midoriya even more because to the boy he loved, Midoriya was *invisible*.

The envy made him sick, disgusted at the ugly darkness that was growing inside of him. He could feel the greedy feasting upon his heart and how his desire to be something *more* with the stunning blond was expanding.

But this year was a big change, filled with one event after another that was demanding all of Midoriya's attention and energy so he hadn't had the time to think properly about any of these romantic troubles yet. While he confided in a few of his new friends, he didn't want to rock the boat of how things were going so far.

Maybe it was because they went through all the villain attacks together but as Midoriya started getting a hang of One For All, it felt like Kacchan was slowly acknowledging him. Sure, there was still a lot of cursing and mean words but that was much better than being ignored completely.

It was probably foolish of him but Midoriya never let the flames of hope die inside his heart. He hoped that if he waited long enough, Katsuki would see him for who he was and realize that Midoriya was the one who had (and *will)* be there for him all along. He hoped that as long as he bided his time, he would find the perfect chance to confess and receive the happy ending in his dreams.

That belief didn't change even after he learned that Katsuki already had a boyfriend.

Midoriya had felt like his heart was going to combust with a seething hot rage when he first learned the news. It was an unreasonable anger over an imaginary betrayal. Kacchan wasn't dating him and he had no right to feel confused or sad over the blond finding happiness. He searched his memory for the possible candidates that could be Katsuki's mystery boyfriend but came up with a blank. Katsuki had been distant and always fleeting, rushing to get to places as soon as school ended. He also went to fashion shows in other countries with his parents a lot when he was young so honestly, Midoriya had no idea who it could be.

"It was so cute! I didn't know Bakugou could be so romantic," Uraraka told them with giddy smiles during lunch one day. "He said Xan was his sky and heaven."

Midoriya accidentally broke an edge off the table when he heard it. That didn't sound like the Kacchan he knew. Kacchan was proud and he would never have laid his heart out like that. *Sky and heaven*...the connotation behind that was heavy with such devotion that it made Midoriya bitter.

Nonetheless, it pained him to hear about how much the guy he loved was in love with someone else. The girls said the boyfriend was older and might be Italian. Midoriya didn't know what to think about that. The first image that came to mind was Dino's face. Maybe it was a man like Prince Charming, tall and handsome, with a dashing pearl white smile and a deep pocket. A sweet romantic who could make Kacchan open up and melt on a bed filled with roses.

Midoriya pushed that image out of his head and focused on school for the next few days. It was unbecoming, really. Kacchan wasn't his and thinking about him being with someone else was just making Midoriya exhausted with sorrow. He should learn to accept that Katsuki didn't know about his feelings for him and would not return this attraction.

It was working. His strategy of filling his time with school work and training along with time with his friends kept his mind off Kacchan's romantic relationship for close to half a month. He was passing by the common lounge when he heard the words that grinded at his nerves.

The girls were having a DIY spa night. They had nail polish sets out with all the other tools so they could do each other's nails and watch a trending soap drama. The boys were invited too but they had been too shy to invade the girls' time. The most they did was make a comment about the drama if they were passing by. Midoriya wasn't sure how Mina managed to drag Katsuki over but he was there doing her nails.

They were talking about long distance relationships, prompted by the K-drama.

"Bakugou you are doing long distance most of the time too, right?" Hagakure asked as she leaned over the arm of the sofa. "Do you have any secrets on how to keep the romance strong? It looks like there's a lot of temptation."

"There's no secret," Katsuki answered without looking up from Mina's nails. "He's not going to cheat on me. That dick is mine and he knows it."

The girls were turned into a giggling mess at the explicit statement.

Midoriya wanted to puke. The thought of someone else laying their hands on Kacchan was vile, like his brain was being wiped down with a rag used to clean toilets. The thought of someone else kissing Kacchan's precious lips, being *allowed* to touch that beautifully fair skin, and be so intimate with him was driving Midoriya mad with jealousy.

And he couldn't help but let his imagination run wild.

Would Kacchan have a coy smile on his face as he beckoned his mysterious lover to share a bed? How far had they gotten? What kind of passionate kisses have they shared and what promises had they made to each other in the heat of the moment?

This was so wrong. Midoriya really wanted his thoughts to grind to a stop but as he tossed and turned on the bed, they simply kept plaguing his dreams. Midoriya was only able to fall asleep when he tried to focus on the memories of the previous One For All users' that he saw in his dreams before.

Still, it was quite late when he was finally able to get some shut eyes.

“Midoriya, did you not sleep well last night?” Todoroki noticed it the next morning.

“Ah, I just got too worked up over thinking about new special moves.” That was such a big fat lie that Midoriya was surprised to hear it come out flawlessly.

“You should take it easy,” Iida said as he passed Midoriya a cold wet towel to help him wake up. “It’s admirable to be working hard but don’t over do it either.”

He thanked his friend and they got to class. Kacchan was already all healed up and the class was quiet as soon as the first bell rang. Aizawa-sensei came in with a stack of papers and announced that the school had arranged a trip for them all.

“We’re going to Kyoto,” Aizawa announced in his usual tired voice. “As most of you will likely remain in Japan after graduation, it is important for you to be respectful of our culture and this trip will help teach you all about working in traditional neighborhoods and how to be respectful. We will also be going over the possible hazards you might encounter if you ever have to fight villains around large wooden structures like a temple.”

“Kyoto! I was there for the middle school graduation trip!”

“Same.”

“Think about all the beautiful geishas…”

Most people were familiar with Kyoto. It was a famous tourist attraction site and where a lot of temples or shrines, along with remains of imperial palaces were located.

“Sensei!” Iida raised his hand straight up in the air. “Isn’t it dangerous for us to leave the campus?”

“It was decided that since the League is dead, the threat is no longer an active one. And there will be additional pro heroes to meet us there. The bus will leave tomorrow morning at ten.” Aizawa-sensei handed out the information sheet to let them know what they could bring but it didn’t contain a schedule, which Midoriya thought must be the teachers still wanting to take some precaution.

Still, everybody was excited.

They happily packed for the trip and got on the bus without any problems. It was about a five to six hours drive depending on traffic. It would have been faster if they could take the bullet train but they didn't want to draw attention by reserving a whole train for UA students.

When they got to Kyoto, the sky had already turned dark, which was natural since it was technically winter already. Midoriya had no idea how Kirishima could run about in the cold in just a T-shirt, which he said was something he learned from Sasagawa-san, one of the civilians who got dragged into the summer camp incident.

The place they were staying at was built with thick wood and dark blue tiles. It was a traditional work of art with one side facing the waters and a cherry blossom tree out the front. The roof was slanted like a temple and the staff were dressed in light green kimonos. They treated them with all the traditional greetings in perfect manners too. The only students in class who were slightly more used to such formalities were Yaoyorozu and Todoroki.

"They are so polite that it kind of makes me question if I'm embarrassing myself," Uraraka whispered and Midoriya couldn't help but nod too.

Checking into the hotel went by without problems. To be fair, Midoriya half expected the teachers to only give them dinner if they could answer some super detailed historical question about the city or they had to perform some kind of task before they could rest but thankfully that wasn't the case. Aizawa-sensei didn't toss them down a cliff to fight any rock monsters this time.

"You can have half an hour of free time before dinner. Do not leave the hotel's premises and report to dining hall A on time," Aizawa-sensei ordered. "And the staff here just notified me that the west garden in the back belongs to the luxury suite, which had already been reserved by a guest so keep out of there and do not disturb the other customers."

"Yes, sir."

Their sensei warned them about other guests and the west garden. So of course they somehow ended up there.

Midoriya wanted to say this wasn't his fault and it really wasn't. They

just got lost because all the hallways looked the same and every corner was identical, like a maze. Thankfully they decided to venture out as a class so none of them felt really alone or didn't know what to do. Everything was fine until they ran into two drunk customers coming back from the hot springs. They were older men, probably in their mid forties, and they were so drunk that they reeked of alcohol. However, they both wore gold chains around their necks and had expensive watches.

"Hey pretty missy," one of them slurred as he grabbed onto Jirou's arm when they passed by each other in the garden. He was hiccuping and wavering as he tried to get a good look at her. "We need more wine."

"I can't help you with that. Please let go. I'm not a staff here." Jirou backed away, trying to pull her arm back.

"I said, we need more wine! Whadda ya mean you don't work here? I can see you in your uniform."

Jirou was wearing a dark shirt with green stripes. Midoriya had no idea how the man was confusing the two.

"She doesn't work here." Mina pulled her friend behind her and Shoji moved in front of them, blocking the men with his large form.

"Now ya little gits are just being dicks to us. That girl clearly doesn't want to do her job. Where's your manager? I'm filing a complaint!" The men were yelling about how kids these days were so spoiled that they can't do their job right. They said some nasty stuff, mocking service staff for being stupid and lazy, unable to perform even the simplest of tasks then they started ranting on about how youngsters had it too easy.

"Again, she doesn't work here, sir." Iida went up to try and get them to stop pestering them. "None of us do. We are guests just like you and it is not our job to serve you. It is also very rude to treat the waitresses so poorly."

"Are you talking back to me now, boy?" He was flushed in the face and veins popped along his thick neck. The man raised his fist and Iida was about to dodge the swinging punch when a book the size of a dictionary flew over his head, smashing directly into the man's nose.

"Ah–!"

He went down holding his bleeding nose while everybody else looked up at the direction where the book came from.

There was a man up on the wooden balcony above. He had dark hair the color of the night and eyes as red as the wine that spilled from the bottle the drunks were holding. A few colorful beads and red feathers draped from his hair down the right side of his neck. His skin was bronze and even from this angle, he looked like a large man. A deep, cruel scowl marked the curves of his lips and he scars over his face, with the most predominant one being a patch of skin darker than the rest over his left cheek. Midoriya would guess he was foreign, given how hard his features looked and his eyes were deadly sharp. One glance from him and they all felt their spines rattled as if they had been scanned by some kind of large predator…the violently carnivorous kind too.

This man had a bottle of cold beer in one hand and he wore a dark blue yukata that was reserved for guests. Since the man wore the yukata loosely like he didn't know how to properly tie the belt, they could see that he had scars all over his muscular build.

Midoriya heard a few people from his class gasping over the scars, but he also suspected that some might be gasps of awe over the toned muscles and incredible pecs.

The man on the balcony glared at the two drunks, which caused the men to run off like scared dogs with their tails between their legs. Then the man, whom Midoriya inferred was the guest who checked into the luxury suite, turned his intimidating gaze on them.

He didn't see them. Midoriya knew the feeling of being right in front of someone but being treated as if they were part of the background or invisible all too well. This guy might be looking at them but he wasn't *seeing* them at all. Instead, it felt more like he was looking at a row of ants crawling by, uninterested and finding them a nuisance.

And then the man met Katsuki's gaze.

"Trash." One lone syllable left his lips. His voice was dark and rich, but it also sounded dangerously low like the warning rumble from the throat of a lion.

Katsuki's eyes were wide. "Xanxus?"

Midoriya felt like he had been thrown into the Arctic ocean in the middle of winter. He glanced between Katsuki and the man as the

puzzle pieces clicked inside his head.

This was “Xan”, Bakugou’s mystery boyfriend.

Chapter End Notes

Yay, they met each other! Now time for more jealous Midoriya in the next chapter LOL. It's also time to get the pro heroes involved because I want to pull Shigaraki back out to play soon.

Hope you all like the encounter and how I'm writing Midoriya so far, would love to hear some feedback (≧▽≦)

Chapter 27: Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Despite having most of the previous field trips interrupted one way or another, Kirishima was still excited for the trip to Kyoto. It was a pretty common choice for middle or high school graduation trips for a good reason. The city was rich in traditional culture and beautiful architecture. Walking down the streets of Kyoto sometimes made people feel as if they had traveled back in time. Dark gray stones tiled the ground and according to the mountains surrounding the city were in shades of golden yellow or dark red. Some branches were already naked, signaling that autumn was fast ending.

The all-expenses-paid hotel they checked into was quite nice too. Of course they didn't have gold plated grounds or anything extremely extravagant but it was clean and quiet, with a nostalgic sense of the past that Kirishima had only ever seen in old movies. It was also close to the waters and located on a hill that gave them a great view.

And so far? No villain attacks!

There weren't any additional tutoring sessions that Kirishima had to attend either so he could enjoy this trip fully with his class.

He didn't expect to solve one of the greatest class mysteries during this trip though.

Before starting at UA, Kirishima made it his personal mission to befriend as many people as he could. He had been shy and unimpressive in middle school but as his resolve to become a hero strengthened, so did his desire for change. Kirishima decided to push himself out into the limelight, to get used to initiating conversations instead of always being in the background and reacting to situations.

He changed his hair, amped up on physical and quirk training, and struck up conversations with his new classmates. They were good people and Kirishima quickly found himself a group of friends. Befriending Bakugou Katsuki was no accident. Kirishima was awestruck by the blond's confidence and natural genius. To be honest, Kirishima wasn't all that deterred by Bakugou's vibrantly colorful vocabulary or seemingly brash nature. Bakugou was smart,

determined, strong, and the kind of bold that Kirishima wished he could be. The blond was never afraid to state his mind and he walked as if he could have the whole world in his hand. He was impressive and eye-catching, exactly the kind of qualities that Kirishima wished he could have more of.

Bakugou was also quite secretive.

Sure, he talked about his home life a bit more when Kirishima and the others pestered him enough. They found out his mom was a model and his dad a fashion designer who doubled with an architectural design degree. The Bakugous owned a clothing brand that was actually pretty popular locally and they were slowly making a name for themselves overseas too (the latter part was discovered from social media and Google). Other than that? Bakugou remained pretty tight-lipped. Before they moved into dorms, Bakugou was often busy after school. While he did tutor Kirishima and the others occasionally, more often he always had somewhere to be. When he wasn't rushing to places, he would be studying in multiple different languages. Most of them were European rooted language systems, which didn't surprise Kirishima because he knew Bakugou was tutoring middle schoolers in Italian.

Bakugou was manly for working so hard.

Brave too. Kirishima was simply amazed at how truthful Bakugou was with his sexual orientation. Coming out was a difficult thing, especially since there were still plenty of people who would consider same sex attraction as abnormalities. The media also enjoyed gossip of trivias like this and most people would choose to have a more established footing in the business before making this part of them known.

Kirishima didn't care. He was happy for his friends as long as they were happy. Boy or girl or anything in between or the unsure? Well, as long as they were good people and obtained consent, Kirishima didn't see why love had to be limited.

He just got curious because this was Bakugou they were talking about. The blond was prideful and prickly, like his heart was covered with thorns. Even though all of them were teenagers, Bakugou was so driven on becoming the absolute best too that it was hard to imagine him being distracted by romance.

Ever since they learned that Bakugou had a boyfriend, they had been

placing secret bets on who or what kind of person this mystery guy could be. Bakugou liked someone who could be his equal, someone who had what it took to take the reins and must be intelligent. He also had high standards for appearances, which Kirishima couldn't blame him for. His parents were in an industry that was hyper focused on physical attractiveness and Bakugou himself certainly wasn't lacking in that department.

They met a few people that Bakugou knew. There was Sawada's group, which Kirishima didn't know well but he had been chatting with Sasagawa about training tips. Honestly, none of them appeared to be the right person, especially after the girls found out from a drunk Bakugou that his boyfriend was working already.

Since high school wasn't mandatory in Japan, Kirishima didn't think too much of it. While it was highly encouraged that people get a high school diploma, Kirishima knew some kids from his middle school joined the workforce directly after graduation. Some went into trades where they interned under a more senior teacher or they inherited a family business (like a noodle shop or small grocery store).

Mina guessed that the boyfriend was older since Bakugou mentioned "subordinates" when talking about his love life. Usually people had to be doing a job for a bit of time before they got promoted, right? His name contained "Xan" or it might be some kind of Italian nickname.

And that was about all they knew. Some of the girls in class guessed it was the Dino guy who sent Bakugou flowers but Bakugou denied it. The atmosphere between Bakugou and Byakuran was so tense that Kirishima didn't think the white haired young man could be referred to as Bakugou's "sky and heaven". He was more like the ground that Bakugou wanted to stomp on. Bel, the *Prince,* was their closest guess before Squalo showed up. For some reason, Kirishima thought that Squalo might be more Bakugou's choice. Bel was too playful and Squalo looked like someone who wouldn't get smacked on the back of his head by Bakugou as often. Or rather, he looked more dependable that Bakugou would be willing to take orders from him.

On a side note, Kirishima didn't know guys can pull off long hair that well. Squalo still looked amazingly manly even with such long hair that must need hours of care to maintain. Bakugou sure knew a lot of attractive males.

But Bakugou said they got it wrong again.

They were kind of out of guesses.

On the other hand, there was also Midoriya's crush. Kirishima would consider himself dense so if even he could see it, then it was basically no secret. Anybody with a pair of functioning eyes could see how hard Midoriya was pinning for Bakugou and his efforts so far had been drained down the gutter. Bakugou was even more blind than a headless chicken stuck in the dark. Any attempts of small talk by Midoriya was shut down as if Bakugou received an insult and physical touches outside of sparring? Yeah, that had not happened.

Midoriya didn't know about Bakugou's mystery boyfriend either so it was a dead end there too.

Too many dead ends led to Mineta suggesting that maybe Bakugou made up the whole thing just to mess with them. He was happy that Bakugou was out of the competition of eligible dating pool from the girls' choices but he also thought that Bakugou's story didn't quite add up.

"Come on, you seriously believe that there's some guy out there who is exactly like Bakugou in temperament but they manage to stand each other? On top of that, what are the chances of him being also gay, rich, foreign, and hot?"

Mineta had a point, which was something that Kirishima didn't think he would hear when it came to topics of dating or romances. Bakugou refused to show them any pictures and he never goes into detail about what his boyfriend did for a living, which only seemed to back up Mineta's suspicions.

However, Bakugou simply looked so happy whenever he talked about his boyfriend that Kirishima didn't want to pry too hard.

And now reality has come to bitch slap them in the face.

Kirishima stood in stupor along with the rest of his classmates as they stared up the balcony. If they went by the traditional definition of "manly", this guy was manly in all possible ways appearance-wise. He was tall with developed muscles that could put top models and athletes to shame. Dark hair and sharp red eyes, he certainly didn't look like someone anybody would want to cross. The scars didn't disfigure him either, instead it only added a dangerous charm. From the strong jawline to the way he carried himself, every part about him was basically dripping with traditional masculinity.

There was none of that posh gentleman feel to him like some people in class suspected. Nope. Absolutely not. He was hard like steel and wilder with much more vibrant vigor.

If that wasn't manly, Kirishima had no idea what else could be.

Only, he did not look or sound friendly at all.

"Trash."

Trash? Was he referring to Bakugou?

Kirishima heard Bakugou call the man "Xanxus". When Kirishima turned around to check on Bakugou, the blond already climbed up to the balcony in a few easy moves. He had also collected the book off the ground and placed it on the small table on the balcony.

"What are you doing here?" Bakugou asked while fixing the man's robe for him, unbothered by the fact that his lover had just called him a degrading term. He pulled the collar close and quickly redid the belt, making sure that Xanxus was properly dressed. "Is it about work again? Did you bring anybody else? We're here for school since they wanted to teach us about traditions and working around temples or historical sites."

Bakugou was talking more than Kirishima had heard him talk for the whole ride here. He didn't seem to need any replies from Xanxus as he continued to chirp. Bakugou's tone was light and Kirishima would even describe it as *cheerful,* containing no trace of the usual explosive anger or stingy coldness. He didn't let go of Xanxus when he was done fixing the robe either. Instead, Bakugou's fingers lingered on the fabric in front of the man's chest. Since he only came up to about Xanxus's neck in height, Bakugou lifted his head to meet his boyfriend's gaze.

Shock had numbed Kirishima's tongue but it hadn't captured Mina's. "Bakugou! Are you going to introduce us?"

She had such bright sparkles in her eyes that Kirishima wondered if he should stop her. For some unknown reason, he felt like they should be treading on eggshells or they were tiptoeing along the edge of a pending volcano. One wrong step and everything was going up in flames.

"This is my boyfriend–Xanxus," Bakugou proudly introduced. His chest was slightly more puffed out as if he had the best Christmas gift in the world. "He's not much of a talker."

They could see that clear as day. Xanxus hadn't acknowledged them at all, not even a short hello or hey. He was as stoic as a rock and a weird squirmy feeling ate at Kirishima from the inside while the hair on the back of his neck stood up as if he was under threat.

Which made no sense at all. It wasn't like they had encountered a villain!

They could also see that Bakugou was head over heels for him. Kirishima had never seen his friend so careful around someone before, Kirishima knew that because he had done the same thing. When he first started to change, he observed people as they talked so he could keep the conversation going with them. Kirishima learned how to read the small body language to know if people were getting uncomfortable or if he needed to stop and let them talk. Bakugou, who was so proud and acted like he was the center of the world, was doing the exact same thing right now. Every twitch of Xanxus's lips or small arch of his brows was translated so that Xanxus didn't have to say a word for Bakugou to understand him.

Kirishima had never seen Bakugou showing so much care or working so hard at pleasing someone before. It also surprised him to actually see that Bakugou's lover was so much older. He guessed actually seeing it happening in person just hit differently from suspecting it.

Xanxus placed a hand around Bakugou's waist but his gaze didn't fall on any of Kirishima's classmates. He had no interest in them at all. Maybe it was the age gap or perhaps Xanxus was just socially awkward? Kirishima had no idea how Bakugou and Xanxus managed to start dating if both of them were emotionally constipated. Wait, actually maybe not. Bakugou was so chatty that Kirishima hardly recognized him. He was like a cat who found catnip!

And oh no, Midoriya looked like he wasn't just in shock, he was *heartbroken*. The colors drained from his face as the reality of seeing Bakugou with his boyfriend must have smacked him like a brick.

"Voi! The hell is up with all the yelping?" The door to the other balcony on the side opened and Squalo appeared. His gray eyes narrowed when he noticed Bakugou and the class beneath. "What are you doing here? Also, why is there blood on Xanxus's book?"

"We're on a field trip. He broke a guy's nose with a book," Katsuki answered calmly.

"Shitty Boss is at it again, huh?" Squalo sighed while pushing his

bangs back. Did he work for Xanxus? Also, why did he sound so used to hearing about his boss getting violent? “I’ll deal with it if we get a complaint. If you’re here on a class trip then you brats should get going.”

Bakugou nodded. He leaned in and got on his tiptoes to plant a kiss on the edge of Xanxus’s lips. “I’ll call you later.”

Xanxus replied with a short grunt. This dynamic was getting weirder to watch by the second. In Kirishima’s imagination, love was supposed to be something sweet and domestic. It was being excited in each other’s presence, smiling and holding hands, doing things they enjoyed together and communicating.

Right now it kind of just looked like Bakugou had the hots for Xanxus and was throwing himself at the man, who didn't reject him for some reason.

Sero leaned in close to Kirishima. “I think somebody swapt Blasty with a clone. He’s being *affectionate.*”

Kaminari stifled a snicker while everybody else in class looked like they got a million questions in their heads. Kirishima wouldn’t be surprised if Midoriya needed some private time to punch a wall though. First they found out that Bakugou’s boyfriend was the definition of sex on legs *and* definitely loaded since he could afford such nice suites, plus Bakugou was being so lovely with him. It was admirable that Midoriya was still remaining so composed.

Footsteps came from behind Kirishima and he heard a familiar voice that made him go stiff.

“What are you all doing here?”

Aizawa-sensei was here.

2

When Nedzu brought up the subject of a field trip during the monthly teaching staff meeting, Aizawa already knew it was coming. This year had been one incident after another and a lot of their teaching plans had to be revised to adjust to the changes and extra precautions needed. However, since the League of Villains’ murder had been announced, the rising crime rate wasn’t climbing as fast any more. It was logical, since the new villains who got riled up were mostly small time crooks who would scatter at the first sign of danger. They

weren't powerful criminal masterminds. They were just idiots who thought it was cool to be bad and not the desperate type to bet everything their lives on the line. The League's death scared the evil back into the dark corners of society.

That meant the heroes' side got a breather and as an educator, Nedzu would never sacrifice a child's learning opportunity unless there was dire threat to their well being.

This trip to Kyoto was supposed to be a calm one. They were not going to push the kids like they did with the training camp and they didn't have any traps or hidden intentions either. It was purely designed to provide an opportunity for the kids to connect deeper with their culture because that was also important for a hero.

Since Kyoto was usually buzzing with tourists and crowds, they decided to rotate the two classes so they wouldn't be trying to manage forty kids at once in a sea of people, drawing too much attention. Class B would receive practical training in one of the specialized gyms while Class A went to Kyoto. Then they would switch.

Of course, being UA, they also recruited additional security measures.

Aizawa met up with Best Jeanist and Gang Orca while his students settled in. The two pro heroes were just at the closest police station to receive an update on things they needed to watch out for in this area. Most of it were normal stuff; descriptions of bra thieves or other persons of interest, some notes on a few larger crimes that happened lately and warnings about unsolved cases or locals who were unstable (such as repeated drunks or homeless members known to cause a scene regularly).

"There doesn't seem to be much going on around here lately besides the usual theft and drunken fights. Except that there was a death about three streets away recently," Gang Orca said.

"A death?" That was a weird term to use. Most of the time Aizawa would hear "murder" or something along those lines.

"Yes, it was quite strange and the police have it on record because of the person involved," Best Jeanist explained as he scrolled through a small tablet. "The person who passed died inside a closed elevator in his apartment. The camera caught him going into an empty elevator alone and when the door opened again, he was dead already. No one else went in or out of the elevator. When they went to check they found that he was actually being wanted by the FBI for crimes he

committed overseas."

"What's the cause of death?"

"Fear," Gang Orca answered and he nodded when he noticed Aizawa's surprise. "Yes, he was so scared that his heart stopped."

Now this sounded like some supernatural stuff. But Aizawa knew better. "Heart attack?"

"That is what the ME concluded."

Strange but all three pro heroes had encountered stranger things. Life was unpredictable like that and didn't need logic to flow. Some things were just because or due to plain bad luck.

They talked a bit more, mostly about the schedule for the UA kids and what Gang Orca and Best Jeanit's roles would be. The main teaching part would be left to experts who were locals in Kyoto, so basically the monks in the temple they were visiting and a few geishas or old umbrella makers. The heroes were here because the students shouldn't be left unsupervised and they had been targeted by villains before so precaution was needed.

"Speaking of kids, shouldn't they be here by now?" Best Jeanist pointed to the clock. It was one minute past the time Aizawa told his class to meet up.

None of his kids were here. Not even Iida.

That wasn't right. Aizawa knew Iida would drag himself here *early* even if he was down with a fever and needed to crawl. Worried that something might have happened to his very unlucky class again, Aizawa decided to go find them.

He didn't expect to find one of his kids in the arms of a man.

He especially didn't expect to find *Bakugou* to be that kid.

Aizawa was not a traditional teacher. Due to the special nature of their profession, UA gave all of the teaching staff a broader range of freedom and authorization for anything related to the education of their students. Unlike normal schools, the pro hero teachers could expel students or request for additional accommodations as they saw fit. They could also tailor the lesson plans and instead of making kids memorize textbooks all day long, they promoted more rounded

learning. Aizawa himself wasn't a very conservative man either so if he saw stuff that was common for normal teenagers outside of class, if it wasn't a large issue then he mostly let it slide. Kids were supposed to be kids. So if they wanted to joke about farts or complain about homework and adults then that wasn't something that needed lectures for.

As a rule of thumb, Aizawa never interfered with a student's romantic life either unless it was causing issues elsewhere. He stayed well out of it since raging teenage hormones, immature outlooks on life, and love was never a good mix. Sex Ed was weird enough as it was, Aizawa really didn't need to know all about his students' love lives.

While he didn't care about the teen drama and who loved who or the breakups, he slept in enough odd places around school to accidentally overhear enough gossip. He knew that Midoriya was harboring a pretty harmless crush on Bakugou, who wasn't interested. Bakugou was dating someone outside of school and he was gay. Nothing wrong there. The class had a betting game on who it could be. Well, what could Aizawa say? They were teenagers with curiosities bigger than the moon.

Bakugou wasn't a bad kid. A little on the cold side with thick walls around his heart but he was not a horrible student or an ill hearted boy. It was nice to know he was enjoying his youth too, other than just studying and training himself to the bones as if that would vent out all his anger and cleanse away all his problems.

But now they have a problem.

Bakugou's boyfriend was not the teenager that Aizawa originally imagined. In fact, this was a *grown man* they were talking about. That changed things.

"Bakugou, who is that?" he boomed in the usual voice he would use to interrogate villains. There was Squalo, who Aizawa met before and found unsettling. The man was like an unsheathed blade from head to toe, hair glistening silver and everything about him just felt sharp, so sharp that even standing next to him would slice their skin.

The other man that Bakugou was clinging onto was even worse. One glance and Aizawa wanted to pull his capture weapon out. This wasn't a good man. No, definitely not. It wasn't just some unlucky guy born with a scary face either. Aizawa's years on the job told him that he was encountering a formidable danger…he hadn't felt like this since

the last time he was pinned down to the ground by Nomu.

“We ran into my boyfriend and his subordinate,” Bakugou answered as he pointed to the dark haired man and Squalo. He climbed down the balcony and landed in front of Aizawa.

Now, Aizawa didn’t think they did anything weird or explicit right in front of their classmates but Aizawa did want to question Bakugou’s love choices in private later. He could see the appeal of why the man on the balcony would be attractive. He had that wild and enigmatic bad boy feel to him, with high arrogance backed by money.

But this was a grown ass man dating a teenager. If that wasn’t sketchy, Aizawa didn’t know what else was. Instead of beer, Aizawa thought this man would be better suited with a smoke or whiskey, something heavy. Also, he absolutely looked like the type of jackass who would stomp on a person’s face just for the hell of it.

“All of you get to the dining hall,” Aizawa ordered. This was no place to be questioning Bakugou. Not in front of his supposed boyfriend and all of his classmates. “We have a tight schedule to keep to.”

Meaning, there wouldn’t be time for Bakugou to sneak off to meet his boyfriend. Aizawa didn't know about before or if Bakugou’s parents knew but no adult was laying a hand on his student while he was around. There would be absolutely no fooling around and not even a chaste kiss.

Dark red eyes that reminded Aizawa of dried blood on stony grounds met his gaze. Bakugou’s boyfriend scoffed as if he knew exactly what Aizawa was doing and walked back into his room.

Aizawa would have to pull Bakugou aside later tonight. It didn't look like Bakugou was coerced into this relationship, which kind of made things tricky because anybody who had ever dealt with lovestruck teens knew that it was near impossible to change their minds until they got their hearts broken.

Squalo rolled his eyes. Yawning, he looked down at Bakugou. “Voi, Bel’s around too so if you see him in the dining halls, tell him to get his ass back to his room. I got shit that I need to go over with him.”

Bakugou nodded.

The bad feeling inside Aizawa’s chest only grew stronger and bolder. He knew Bakugou was a competent kid who was mature for his age

but he really didn’t like the fact that he was associated with all these strange foreigners.

God, this field trip was already off to a bad start wasn’t it?

Chapter End Notes

I want to go back to Midoriya POV so I can have lots of jealous Midoriya *evil laugh
Would make more sense for him to see more of Katsuki and Xanxus's interaction too so sorry in advance, but we'll have more "icky" and teen angst vibe to the next chapter.

Also, I'm slowly going through the comments but thank you all for the comments, they really motivate me to write <3

Chapter 28: Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

His world was falling apart.

Not literally but it sure felt close to it. Midoriy stared at the white tiles of the washroom floor as he tried to reorganize his messy thoughts. His brain was so fried and his heart so shattered that he barely felt any sparks of excitement from seeing Best Jeanist and Gang Orca.

He knew Kacchan was dating someone already but actually *seeing* it felt so much worse than he could ever imagine. Midoriya was already happy to be able to talk to Katsuki and see him everyday. It was also easier to not have to think about his feelings for his childhood friend or about Kacchan already dating when they were in school.

Of course, Midoriya had imagined how Kacchan would interact with his boyfriend but usually it was with *him* as the boyfriend. Not the Italian guy he just saw.

Xanxus was an intimidating man. He was the definition of tall, dark, and dangerously handsome. Comparing himself to Xanxus, Midoriya couldn't help but feel a little insecure about his own body. His body was no longer as scrawny as it was back in middle school and he was still growing but he was still short. He couldn't compare to Xanxus in height or muscle mass. Midoriya also wondered how the man got those scars…they didn't look like burns and were more similar to frostbites?

He did look like someone who was authoritative though, someone who was confident and able to take charge as naturally as breathing. While Midoriya was slowly getting more comfortable with being assertive, he knew it wasn't enough.

Not to mention, Kacchan simply adored Xanxus. Katsuki had never been one for physical touches but now his hands lingered on his boyfriend and he sticked close as if he had been glued by Xanxus's side.

The jealousy was eating Midoriya alive, consuming his heart whole and leaving nothing behind.

Midoriya wanted to know everything about this romance and Xanxus. Who was he? What did he do to get Kacchan's affection? Did Kacchan feel the butterflies when he looked at Xanxus, like Midoriya did whenever he saw the blond?

And the way they interacted absolutely shook Midoriya. Kacchan was so lively and chirpy with Xanxus but the joy of seeing each other didn't seem to go both ways. Xanxus called Katsuki "trash" and basically said nothing while Katsuki swooned over him. Midoriya was angry over how little care Xanxus seemed to have when he had the one thing (Kacchan's love) that Midoriya would literally die for. He really wished it was him on that balcony with Kacchan fixing his clothing for him. The act wasn't anything lewd but it was oddly intimate and domestic.

Xanxus didn't know how lucky he was to be able to hold Katsuki like that. He didn't understand how privileged he was to be able to kiss those delicate lips and have Katsuki so close by his side. Midoriya nearly screamed when he saw how nonchalant Xanxus was about all the affection Kacchan was showing him. The man was like a rock, offering no gentleness or soft words in return. Not even a "thank you" or "I missed you", which Midoriya supposed was a bit odd but not abnormal since every couple was different.

"Midoriya," Todoroki's voice came over the closed stall door along with a knock. "Are you alright?"

Sniffling and making sure that he was at least presentable, Midoriya opened the door. He smiled at his friend as he went over to the sink and washed his hands. "Yes, I'm fine."

Todoroki didn't believe him.

"You want to talk about it?"

"No, not really." He really would rather feel sorry for himself in silence than to unravel all of his emotions in the middle of a fancy washroom. "We should get back to the dining hall."

Midoriya had to discreetly excuse himself because he really needed a minute to compose himself. He had no doubt that his classmates would be asking Katsuki all kinds of questions about Xanxus and he wasn't sure if he could stand it without breaking down or saying something rude.

That wouldn't be right of him. Katsuki was happy with his boyfriend.

Midoriya should be happy for him…even if said boyfriend was a lot older than he imagined.

Todoroki squeezed Midoriya's shoulder in an attempt to comfort him.

When they got back to where everybody else was, their classmates were already having food. Dinner was a set of very traditional Japanese cuisine that was separated into individual portions and served on a wooden tray. The hotel had two long tables set up so everybody in class could fit into the room with its paper sliding doors and expensive handmade tatamis. The food might have been good but Midoriya was too busy eavesdropping on Kacchan's conversation with the Bakusquad.

"Bakugou, no wonder you never showed us a picture." Mina was super excited over this but she kept her voice down in order to not disrupt the other guests in the next room. "Xanxus is super hot."

"He's kind of um…" Kaminari gestured wildly with his hands, trying to find the right words for it. "You know! Like he's a noble or a king from some small European nation."

Yeah, the kind of guy who would have the head of a lion mounted on his fancy wallpaper, sitting in an armchair in a room of thick fur carpets in front of his fireplace while drinking expensive wine. Midoriya didn't want to keep comparing himself to Xanxus because no matter how he looked at it, it felt like he was never going to measure up.

Kirishima also leaned closer to Kacchan. "Dude, I know this is going to be so rude but what's up with all the scars? Did he get into an accident?"

"That detail is private," Kacchan said. He was back to his usual abrasive and nasty cold self but there was an unmistakable fondness hidden underneath his scowl. "He doesn't like people talking about it."

"What does he do?"

"He runs a security firm that's a branch of his dad's corporation in Italy, with high profile clients and time sensitive work. There's a lot of NDAs involved so we can't talk about it much."

So he was rich. A foreigner also confirmed. Midoriya guessed Xanxus was lined up for a big inheritance too if his dad owned a business. It

certainly didn't sound like they were humble small business owners of an orchard or mediocre factory if they had connections to high places and needed to be so secretive.

"How did you two get together? We want to hear all about your love story please!"

The girls were getting giddy about this topic. Honestly, Midoriya could see some of the guys, who normally weren't the gossip types like Koda, getting anxious about it too. They were just so curious. Katsuki, with his sharp tongue and a pride three sizes of his head, got together with a man who looked like sin personified. How did that happen? When did that happen?

Midoriya had been watching Kacchan his whole life. They live so close, went to the same school, and their moms talked to each other on the phone. It was near impossible to not overhear or see something about the other person. For all he knew, Katsuki never so much had a celebrity crush so when did he get together with Xanxus?

To a certain extent, Midoriya felt betrayed or that the rug was suddenly pulled out from under him. Somebody weaseled their way into Kacchan's heart without him knowing.

"It's not nice to be prying into other people's love life. Also, Boss wouldn't like him blabbering." A hand came from behind Kacchan, covering his mouth. It was Bel, the blond boy that called Kacchan *Princess.* He was still wearing his silver tiara and he had on a purple and black striped shirt, along with a pair of dark pants that had a sort of punk goth vibe to it. His bangs covered a good part of his eyes but Midoriya could see the grin on his face growing larger as he spooked them.

Surprise flashed across everybody's faces. They hadn't noticed anybody sneaking in.

"Bel." Katsuki pulled Bel's hand off his face. "Squalo is looking for you. It's probably got something to do with work."

"You work for Bakugou's boyfriend?" Sato voiced their surprise for everybody. Bel looked around their age and even though he did say he worked, it was strange to think a teenager was working in a high end security firm.

Maybe he took care of paperwork or cleaning? Or maybe he was like an intern.

“Boss would pick competent people over idiots of the right age. Completely legal of course.” Bel’s explanation didn’t ease the odd feeling inside Midoriya’s stomach. Sure, it was fine for teens to be taking on part time jobs but somehow he just felt like Bel wasn’t the type to be working a boring office job or anything related to retail and customer facing fronts.

Midoriya noticed Aizawa-sensei looking their way but their teacher didn’t chase Bel out. Maybe Aizawa-sensei was trying to get more information before he took action?

“You guys must all have really great quirks and stamina to be able to do your jobs.” Kirishima had looked into other career aspects when he wasn’t sure if he was cut out for heroics. While most civilian security and police weren’t authorized to use their quirks in public, that rule could be bent slightly on private property. For example, if someone had a surveillance quirk and they used that to watch over their own gardens, then it was considered legal usage of a quirk. Kirishima imagined private bodyguards to be the same, except that they would wear sunglasses and black suits like in the movies. However, it was a fine line that people walked on and there were lots of gray areas.

“What are you talking about?” Bel’s smile quivered for a second but the confusion was quickly replaced with his usual carefree smile. “Boss is quirkless.”

“He’s quirkless?” Midoriya couldn’t help but blurt out loud, a little too hastily too since everyone turned to look at him.

“Yeah.”

“And he’s running the show for field operations?” Midoriya felt his jaw dropping. All his life he had heard about how useless quirkless people were and how they were weaker or more trouble to deal with. At times, it felt like nobody believed they could amount to anything. He frequented quirkless communities online where people like him cheered each other on and he had heard a few success stories in tech or other scholarly and business fields. Police, emergency response, and other related fields where they might be villains weren’t the top choices that quirkless people got involved with professionally, or even succeeded in. “Isn’t that a little…dangerous?”

“Danger’s part of the job.” Bel shrugged. “Why *can’t* he runs ops?”

He asked that in a way that simply baffled Midoriya. The sincere confusion was dripping through every syllable as if Bel thought

Midoriya asked a really dumb question. It felt as if the older blond was completely unaware of the striking disadvantages and discriminations that quirkless people faced…or rather, he didn't think any of that was enough of a challenge to bring Xanxus down.

"I-um-oh, I just thought that it was dangerous, especially if he had to face off villains with powerful quirks on the job," stammered Midoriya as he tried to save this conversation. He didn't want it to get too weird, especially since it hit so close to home and that Kacchan was watching him right now.

"He's Boss, there's no way that he'd get taken down by small fry like that. Isn't that right, Katsuki?"

Kacchan scuffed but his expression said everything. He had full confidence in his boyfriend's abilities.

God, Midoriya felt even more miserable now. He was…he didn't quite know if he was classifying his feelings correctly at the moment. He knew he was shocked and hurt, but also a little angry and confused. It didn't help that his brain was nagging at him, asking him about all the What-Ifs.

If Kacchan was okay with quirkless people, would they be a happy couple now if Midoriya had the guts to ask him out a little earlier?

He also wondered about what Kacchan saw in Xanxus and how serious this relationship was. Katsuki seemed to know an awful lot about Xanxus's colleagues and they were all close. If Katsuki was just having a fling, attracted to the older man because it looked cool to be dating an attractive older guy then Midoriya might not feel as bad. He could understand that. Kacchan was still human and needed to blow some steam and that he was attractive in many ways so of course he would be highly sought after. However, it was starting to look like the two of them were serious, and Midoriya was having trouble swallowing that fact.

Bel left. When they finished eating, Aizawa-sensei let Gang Orca and Iida lead everybody back to their rooms. However, he pulled Kacchan aside.

It was so wrong of Midoriya to secretly hope that their teacher might be able to stop the madness and break Kacchan and Xanxus up.

“Bakugou,” Aizawa said calmly. “I need to talk to you.”

The blond teen followed him to a quiet corner, where Aizawa was sure no one would be able to eavesdrop on them since this was a rather private talk.

“I understand that you are dating the man we saw earlier,” Aizawa started, choosing his words rather carefully because this was a teen romance, which no matter what was always messy and Bakugou had never been an open book. “I’m sure you know he is a lot older than you.”

“He’s only twenty four,” Bakugou said defensively immediately.

“That is still an adult.” Aizawa absolutely wasn’t the candidate to be doing this type of job. This was definitely way more Midnight or Present Mic’s territory. “I am not going to say that kids should only focus on school and romance is bad but I do need confirmation from you that this is a consensual relationship on both sides and you are not being hurt in any way. Even if you feel slightly uncomfortable, you can tell me.”

“…Uncomfortable?” Bakugou arched an eyebrow, looking confused.

“Yes. Has he ever coerced you into doing something you don’t want? Or pressure you to move things faster than you are comfortable with?”

“Xanxus and I are fine.” Bakugou brushed Aizawa’s concern off immediately. He sounded pretty genuine about it too. “We got our arguments but we can sort it out on our own. Besides, if he tries anything funny I will explode his ass.”

That Aizawa had no doubt about. Still, it concerned him that his teen student was in a relationship with a man that looked…less than endearing. Aizawa was basing his feelings about the man on one meeting with no evidence but his gut told him to not trust Xanxus. This man looked like the type to not have a stellar reputation and there was something unnerving about how cold his stare was, yet facing the man himself felt like watching a moving inferno waiting to be unleashed.

It wasn’t Aizawa’s job to interfere with love but he had a duty to make sure proper safeguards were in place. Teens and children could look and talk wise beyond their years but at the end of the day, they were still just kids. Kids who could do dumb things in the heat of the moment or be persuaded into throwing themselves into pits of fire

upon hearing lies sweeter than candy.

He couldn't protect them forever and Aizawa knew that as rising new heroes, each of his students had a great possibility of ending up in the morgue much too soon. As a pro hero, it was his job to teach them how to *not* die. They would get hurt in this job but Aizawa hoped three years would give them enough time to learn the tools of how to prolong their lives even just minutes on the battlefield.

As a *teacher* and a responsible adult, however, meant that he had a duty to ensure his students survive healthily until graduation and that was what Aizawa had been doing since he started his job.

Bakugou was a difficult kid. There was no doubt about that. He was secretive and didn't fit into the crowd. A loud kid with an even louder quirk, the boy was a genius filled with pride. He often came off as rude but Aizawa knew the wheel's in the kid's brain were spinning faster than they should, always thinking and planning ahead. Unlike his peers, he seemed to have already understood the harsher realities of the world and was able to make peace with it.

But Bakugou was still young. Aizawa could see it in the soft lines of his cheeks and how he'd pout childishly in silence when he didn't get his way. Predators loved those. Aizawa was disgusted but he had seen too many of that type of people to count. They loved to sexualize the innocence of children and take advantage of young hearts that were still trying to figure out the world. They'd find a crack of vulnerability and then nurture it before filling the cracks with their harrowing desires, protesting that it wasn't their love that was the sin for the devil lived in the charming sways of the children's hips or the alluring stares filled with trust.

He could tell why people would believe Bakugou was attractive and Aizawa didn't want his student to be a victim to the schemes of filthy adults. Twenty four was a young man, fresh out of higher education but still too old with far more experience than a sixteen year old.

"You're thinking that Xanxus looks like bad news," Bakugou suddenly said, pulling Aizawa out of his thoughts. Sharp red gaze met his eyes and Bakugou, stripped of the usual fierce and rebellious attitude, calmly said, "Yeah, don't look so surprised. I get why people would think that. He's not the friendliest guy out there but it's not like I'm a saint either so don't worry about it, he's been good to me."

Bakugou's shoulders, which were always tense and straightened with

pride, slouched ever so slightly. There was an ease in his posture and the relaxed lines showed that he was thinking about something happy and comfortable.

“He’s not much of a romantic but he listens to me when I talk and he motivates me to become even better.” The joy and longing in Bakugou’s voice was unmistakable even if his expression didn’t show it. A nerve clicked inside Aizawa’s head. This was what Bakugou was chasing. He wanted to become even better and more successful to catch up to his boyfriend.

That was cute and sweet actually, a reason that Aizawa didn’t think would be related to Bakugou’s strong desire to be the best in everything. It didn’t drastically change Aizawa’s outlook on Bakugou as a person or alter his perception about Xanxus but it was new knowledge that the pro hero filed away inside his head.

This wasn’t a good time or place to go in depth with Bakugou’s romantic issues. Aizawa also didn’t want to continue this without proper consultation with his colleagues or Bakugou’s parents either.

So he would not press further right now. At least not on Bakugou’s side because the thing with teenagers was that the harder he pushed, the stronger they recoiled.

“If you ever need someone to talk to or ever feel unsafe in any way, my emergency line is always open,” Aizawa reminded before allowing Bakugou to go back to join his classmates.

In hindsight, it probably should have occurred to him sooner that Bakugou never once mentioned “love” when talking about his relationship with Xanxus.

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Best Jeanist asked where Aizawa was going on the phone, to which Aizawa replied that he needed to speak with Bakugou’s boyfriend and asked the No. 4 hero if he could stay with the students. The adult pro heroes’ were staying in the room right between the girls and the boy’s rooms so if anything happened, they would be able to react to it in time.

“Gang Orca went out to check the perimeter,” Best Jeanist said. “If you need back up, he would probably be closer.”

“Thank you,” replied Aizawa. He approached the suite he was looking

for and he wasn't really surprised to see Squalo waiting outside the door. The silver haired man was in a simple white shirt and dark trousers. His left hand was covered by a black leather glove and he leaned against the door frame with his arms crossed in front of his chest.

Silver eyes, the color of a storm heavy with rain, landed on Aizawa.

"Boss is asleep," Squalo warned in a low voice. "He doesn't like being disturbed when he's resting."

"I would still like to have a chat with him, tomorrow morning would be fine as well." Aizawa thought he was being reasonably calm. It wasn't the first time he had to deal with relationship issues of his students but never before had he been in a situation like this one. Usually the trouble arose between two minors, with some being 18 or 19, which wasn't that uncommon. He'd only ever had to deal with suspicious older men around his students when it came to perverted villains or flashers. Sure, he had heard about his colleagues or teachers from other schools needing to intervene with suspicious relationships but he was pretty sure none of the other parties had ever been as…*unsettling*.

Aizawa wasn't facing a villain yet he felt as if he had accidentally fallen into the shark tank at the aquarium. The coldness grew from the pit of his stomach and his limbs felt the numbing chills. It was a tricky situation. Xanxus was a foreigner with money. While Aizawa wasn't sure how far his connections ran, this factor would only make attempts to charge him with a crime harder. Not to mention, judging from Bakugou's reaction it would be impossible to try and get him to say that his boyfriend was doing anything wrong.

"Ushishishi, Boss doesn't have time to waste on these trivial things." A teenager sat by the window behind Aizawa. He was the blond boy that Aizawa saw sneaked into UA's dinner time undetected. Bel, as Aizawa heard his students call him, was light on his feet like a cat and had the stealth of one too. "Anything you want to know you can ask us. I think Princess already explained it to you though, so what's with the interrogation?"

"Princess?" Aizawa repeated.

Bel smiled. "Yep, I'm the prince so Boss would be king. He needs a princess doesn't he?"

Everything about that statement carried a grotesque fairytale feeling

to it. It both made sense and didn't at the same time in a way that made Aizawa suspect mental instability. It was a discreet madness that had already gouged deep into the brain but whose depth couldn't be measured from the surface.

"I find romanticizing physically intimate relationships between an adult and a minor concerning," Aizawa managed to keep his voice steady and his heart rate even. "I can't say for your practice of hiring minors but as Bakugou's homeroom teacher, I have a duty to make sure that he is not harmed or being associated with questionable characters."

"What's your definition for questionable?" Squalo pushed himself off the door and walked closer toward Aizawa. "That we got meaner looking faces? Look, we don't want any trouble and we're not committing a crime by being here. What's going on between Boss and the brat is their private business and shouldn't you consider the kid's feelings about it?"

His eyes narrowed as a scowl formed on his lips.

"They're not on the same continent for most of the year and Boss hates video chats. No nudes or other compromising data had been shared. He is not giving Boss money or buying unreasonably expensive gifts to appease an older lover. No drugs involved either. The age gap might be a little big but Bakugou isn't suffering from it or asking for help now, is he?"

He sounded way too confident and Aizawa didn't like that. The pro hero didn't back down.

"...Why do you know so much about their relationship?"

"I'm the second in command so any communication or packages to Boss goes through me first unless it's an emergency. *And* I also happen to be the unfortunate bastard who knew the kid and Xanxus the longest. I told you before, the kid is like family."

Bel snickered, chuckling under his breath while Squalo glared at him.

Staring at the shut door behind Squalo, Aizawa knew this was a dead end tonight. He didn't have any incriminating hard evidence that something sinister was happening behind closed doors. Bakugou's age also meant that the statutory rape charges couldn't apply automatically without the teenager willing to testify against his boyfriend. Aizawa was just the teacher and his rights and

responsibilities over his student do not take importance over his parents'. He couldn't simply take someone to court over suspicions that harm was being done to a kid that was not his, biologically or legally speaking.

In response, Aizawa nodded and turned to walk away.

As Aizawa was making his way through the garden, he stopped and turned to look up at the balcony of the luxury suite. The windows were closed and the light was not on but Aizawa still stared at it. His intuitions told him that Xanxus wasn't really asleep but the man didn't feel like the cowardly type to avoid confrontations either.

Was there a reason other than pure arrogance that he didn't want to speak with Aizawa face to face? After all, if he had nothing to hide, why wouldn't he be willing to talk?

When he got back to his room, Aizawa took out his phone and started editing a text to Nedzu. When he was done, he hit the send button and let out a sigh.

He hoped their principal would be able to tackle this problem properly.

3

It got worse.

Midoriya had no idea how meeting Kacchan's boyfriend could get any worse but it did and he hated every second of it. The second day's breakfast was served buffet style. Instead of the quiet room that provided a little more privacy, they were led down to a different dining space. This one was a large lobby that opened up to a deck over the waters so people could enjoy the view. The food was stationed on long tables and there was a window where they could see into the kitchen while the chefs prepared fresh sashimi and other food.

Everything would have been nice if Bakugou's boyfriend wasn't here.

Since it was still early, there weren't a lot of people here. Mostly it was just their class, the three pro heroes, and one or two staff cleaning.

"I see that you didn't sleep well, Izuku-kun." Uraraka looked worried. "Were you up all night, Midoriya-kun?"

“Kind of…” It was just so hard to sleep with his brain streaming all sorts of emotions. His brain was in an infinity loop of denial and self-deprecation while Kacchan and Xanxus’s faces kept popping into his dreams. He knew that he should be happy for Katsuki but he also couldn’t help but *really* want to punch Xanxus in the face with 100% OFA.

That was such an unheroic thought.

But god, Midoriya wanted to do that so bad.

He voiced that thought out loud.

“If it is so bad, you probably want to stay away from him for the time being. According to my brother, distance and time makes everything feel less painful,” Iida offered along with handing Midoriya a cup of strong coffee.

Midoriya took the coffee. He really needed it. They were talking quietly and since each table here only sat four, the rest of their classmates were all over the dining area, all chatting excitedly and eating their fill. Katsuki’s attention was on Kaminari’s phone so Midoriya didn’t need to worry about him overhearing either.

“Or open up your dating pool and look for someone else.” Todoroki picked up his miso soup and drank it while Midoriya almost choked on his coffee.

“I wish it was that easy.” It had always been Kacchan, with his pale skin and blond hair and that smile that could rival the sun. No one else had ever come close to making Midoriya’s heart throbbed as it did. Kacchan just had that bewitching magic about him, able to stir a thousand emotions inside Midoriya with just a glance or one word.

He knew he had it bad but after finding out Xanxus was quirkless? It took a nosedive into the absolutely-shitty-and-horrible territory.

In this world where the majority all had quirks, a part of him wondered if Xanxus knew what it was like to be teased everyday at school or get upset at the pity in other people’s eyes whenever the topic came up, simply because he didn’t have the one thing everybody else was born with. The number of quirkless people were dwindling each generation, plus the high suicide rates only made things worse. Midoriya shouldn't be admiring the competition but for a quirkless man to make it in a field that was normally dominated by people with the right quirks, it was an astonishing success.

Maybe that was why Kacchan liked him.

Xanxus didn't wallow in self pity and he went to get what he wanted. He strived for the top, to be better, and he never felt like everything he did wasn't going to be enough. Or maybe he did but he got over it.

Anyways, Midoriya was having a hard time shaking the frustration off. He kept feeling that if Xanxus was out of the picture, he would have a chance with Kacchan. He knew the blond boy for longer and they went to school together, they were going for the same goal and would most definitely enter the same field. Technically, Midoriya had more in common with Kacchan than a random Italian man.

Midoriya was just starting to dig into his food when he saw them come in.

Xanxus dropped himself into a chair by the table close to the water. He was in a gray shirt with the top buttons undone and dark pants. Leather shoes polished to a shine, a few colorful feathers and beads along with some kind of fur draped down from his hair.

It might be Midoriya's imagination but as soon as the man stepped into the room, it felt as if everyone was suddenly entering stealth mode, trying their best to be quieter.

Squalo got Xanxus a plate of food that was nicely plated and a server brought over a bottle of wine and wine glasses. All of that felt so out of this world. Midoriya and most of his classmates certainly weren't used to having people serve them.

"Scum, I don't want to eat that," Xanxus said after taking one look at the food on his plate.

"What do you want then?" Squalo asked in an irritated tone.

"Whatever."

A vein popped along Squalo's temple as he placed a plate of steak in front of Xanxus instead. "It's too early for one of your moods, make up your mind and choose something. This is kobe beef and it's the best they got."

Bel was laughing in that creepy laugh of his as he played with a butter knife, tossing it up and down as well as spinning it like it was a pencil.

Midoriya felt like he only moved his eyes away for a split second and

then there was a loud bonking sound and Squalo's forehead was red. He was cursing under his breath as he rubbed the spot.

"Did he just slam the other guy's head onto the table?" Sato whispered to Tokoyami in utter disbelief. Wait, what? Did Xanxus slam Squalo into the table just because the latter didn't bring him the food he found appetizing?

"For god's sake, stop being so picky." Katsuki went over and opened the wine bottle with practiced ease. He poured a glass, gracefully professional as if he was a real bartender, and then set it in front of Xanxus. "And you two, pipe the fuck down. It's embarrassing."

"The prince said nothing."

Katsuki snatched the butter knife out of the air and set it on the table. "I can hear you thinking. And Xanxus, just eat."

"Don't give me orders, trash."

"I don't have to if you stop being such a big baby. What do you want me to do? Go to the kitchen and make you stuff?"

There was a huff from Xanxus that sounded like Katsuki's suggestion was exactly what he was thinking. Katsuki rolled his eyes at that.

Squalo pointed an accusing hand to Xanxus as he sat down, as if gesturing to point out how Xanxus started the mess. Kacchan was still standing by their table. He poured Squalo a glass of wine too and went over to the food, picking out some stuff from the array of selections. He set the larger plate in front of Squalo, who hadn't gotten his own food yet and the smaller one with a few appetizers that weren't harsh on the stomach or with too much spices in front of Xanxus.

"Buongiorno," Katsuki said softly, tune turning gentler in a soothing manner while leaning down to kiss on Xanxus's temple. "I'm here for school so be nice."

The man glanced at him with a deep frown before picking up a fork to eat. He drank wine like it was water and when he was done with a glass, Katsuki poured another for him. Squalo raised his hand up without saying a word and as if on cue, Katsuki handed him a fresh napkin plus added milk and sugar to the man's coffee. Bel tossed an apple at Katsuki, who skinned it for him. Occasionally Katsuki would take something off one of their plates and pop it into his mouth.

This looked so wrong. Kacchan wasn't their waiter or maid!

Midoriya gawked at what was happening. In reality, it was a really quick exchange and Kacchan went back to his seat to finish his own food but in Midoriya's head, it felt like an eternity. Why did Kacchan do that? And why was no one objecting to it? Wasn't Katsuki Xanxus's boyfriend? So why were they treating him like the help who could only have scraps off the employer's plates?

But all of them looked so used to it. Katsuki too. Midoriya wasn't sure how he could describe it but the icky feeling inside his chest was similar to disgust towards a pure display of what he considered misogyny. It was very weird since Kacchan was a boy but it was the closest description Midoriya could think of. Like the old days, where women and girls were expected to serve and make sure all the men had their happy fill before they could eat.

The fact that it was *Bakugou Katsuki* playing the role of submissive housewife was the part that truly baffled everybody.

An intrusive thought featuring Kacchan in an apron and greeting Midoriya after a long day of work forced its way into his head. Biting his lips, Midoriya shook the all too tempting image out.

Seeming to have noticed Kirishima and everybody else staring at him, Bakugou looked up from his food. "What?"

"Um, dude, what was that?" Kirishima discreetly pointed to Xanxus's table.

"He's a pain in the ass when it comes to food," Katsuki answered as if that should explain everything. "Just ignore them."

No. They *shouldn't* just ignore them. How could they just pretend they didn't see *that?*

Midoriya was feeling the urge to punch Xanxus square in the face again. He wanted to scream at the man for not appreciating Kacchan and using him as a servant. How could the man claim to be in a relationship with Katsuki but treat him with so little care? That wasn't love. Love wasn't supposed to feel so cold, even if they wanted to argue that Xanxus could just be a reserved person who didn't enjoy PDA.

It pained him, made him feel rotten to watch the one he loved be so careful at pleasing others like a lap dog. He wanted to go up there and

scream at Xanxus about how if he couldn't appreciate Kacchan, he should leave Kacchan alone. Midoriya knew he could treat the blond so much better. Also, what kind of people would physically assault their subordinates? That was wrong on so many levels!

As Aizawa-sensei told everybody to clean up and get ready for their tour around Kyoto, Midoriya couldn’t help but keep glancing back at Katsuki and then at Xanxus’s group. The dreaded feeling in his heart grew stronger as he watched the dark haired man eat. He barely nodded when Katsuki said goodbye to him and he still looked like the world owned him a billion dollars or that there was a constant foul smell under his nose.

This man was bad for Kacchan. Midoriya would bet his life on it.

Chapter End Notes

I had fun writing this. Hope you did reading it too :)

Next chapter:

Midoriya: Operation steal my man back is in effect

Even though Kacchan was never his to begin with LOL

Chapter 29: Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Mina was a romantic.

She was into a bunch of soap dramas and she fantasized about her future other half too, thinking about the kind of traits she would want in a long term partner. Since she was busy with school and trying to become a hero, she didn't have a lot of time to be intensely romantically involved with someone. But that didn't mean she couldn't dream!

UA was brutal when it came to courseload and threw a bunch of curve balls at them, pushing them to their limits every week. It also didn't help that their class seemed to be constantly targeted by villains. Thus, Mina would admit that she found some relaxing distractions in learning about all the juicy gossip around school. Usually it was the Gen Ed kids getting together or just normal stuff like someone made a fool of themselves while inventing new gadgets. Celebrity romances were also fun to read about, especially when one party was a hero.

Now Bakugou's romance was a delicious mystery that Mina was starting to think she actually didn't want answers to. It just felt like one of those things where if the time came, Bakugou would introduce them.

Meeting Bakugou's boyfriend didn't go how Mina would imagine.

Xanxus was hot and older but also had this intense feeling to him that Mina wasn't really comfortable around. He was *too much,* too much of everything actually. It felt like he would rip their throats out or chew them up if they said one wrong word or made a mistake. As attractive as he was, Mina was scared of him more than she appreciated his physical hotness.

Mina wanted to give Xanxus the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he just looked intimidating but was actually a sweetheart. Otherwise, how could he turn *Bakugou* all soft and mushy, like the blond teen had found a bed made of clouds that he never wanted to leave?

Yeah…that wasn't the case.

She might be young but she understood that not all relationships looked the same. Not all love stories started out by accidentally bumping into each other around a corner or were filled with memories of joyfully teasing each other while sharing a bento box under a tree. Some love were messier than others and heartbreaks were natural progressions because it was normal for people to grow apart or for passion to wane. That was what all the books and movies showed, right? It was life and love was just a part of life.

However, Mina could recognize red flags.

Xanxus didn't just talk down to Bakugou. He barked every communication like an order and *slammed his coworker's head into a table* over a very stupid dispute. No, it wasn't even an argument or disagreement. It was just a conversation about the food being served and he physically assaulted Squalo over that.

Even if Squalo worked for him, that was no way to treat other people. Mina's mom always said that they could tell a lot about a person by how they treat servers or people in lower ranks. So far, Xanxus was not making a good impression at all.

But Bakugou didn't seem to see any issue with it. Mina watched in both intrigued terror and shock as her very foul tempered friend served Xanxus and his coworkers food. He didn't look insulted or bitter over it, more that he was used to having to deal with such demands and that he wasn't a bit fazed by it.

Was there some kind of cultural difference that Mina wasn't aware of? There must be. Or why else did something that should look wrong appear lightheartedly normal and domestic?

Kaminari stepped on her foot and she did the same to him. Since both of them felt pain, it told them that this wasn't a dream.

If Aizawa-sensei wasn't around, Mina would have shook Bakugou by the collar to ask him what was all that about.

When drunk Bakugou confessed he loved his boyfriend dearly, Mina had imagined a partner who was gentle but perhaps awkward and not good with his words. Not…whatever the hell this dumpster fire mess of a man Xanxus was.

No amount of money and muscles could make Mina just ignore all the

violent and mean-spirited tendencies the man had displayed.

And she barely knew him for less than two hours!

“Bakugou, are you sure you can’t do better?” Mina whispered quietly while they were walking through the shrine their class stopped by as their first stop on this field trip. It was a large one and honestly, Mina couldn’t tell the difference in the kind of materials used or the way everything was put together that differentiated it from the other temples. All she knew was that everything was neatly put together and the rocks used to form the walls were larger.

“What do you mean?” Bakugou sounded genuinely confused.

“Xanxus. He comes on a little strong, doesn’t he?” The type to keep pushing until he got what he wanted. Mina didn’t want her friend to be in a relationship that eroded his boundaries.

“He’s just used to being in charge.”

Understandable but didn’t make full sense at the same time.

“And you’re okay with him yelling at you?”

“I yell back.”

Mina could see that happening. Bakugou was hot-tempered too and he wouldn’t shy away from profanities or screaming matches. This really wasn’t looking like a healthy relationship…or maybe that was what it took for a relationship with Bakugou to work? She had also never seen Bakugou so comfortable in his own skin while next to someone. His gaze was glued onto the man and he was so attentive and amiable.

Maybe Xanxus was nicer when they were alone. Maybe it was just that Mina didn’t have enough time to get to know the guy well before she made her judgments. For Bakugou’s sake, she really hoped that she was just reading too much into things, despite the quiet voice inside Mina’s continuing to nag her about the glaring red flags.

She tried to focus on the lesson for the rest of the day.

During break, she tried to search up Xanxus but found nothing. There was no social media presence at all. And she meant *nothing*. Not even a mention of him on a company site or any professional profiles. This man was a ghost on the internet and Mina got it, not everybody liked having their lives broadcasted on the internet everyday. Bakugou

barely used his own social media accounts too.

She tried to machine translate some of the Italian security companies but that was proving to be a hassle. It was like trying to fish a needle from a haystack and since Bakugou did mention there were a lot of sensitive work involved, it was highly unlikely they would put every case the security firm handled and who were in on it out on the web.

When she looked up, she saw that Kirishima had the same look of defeat on his face.

“No luck?”

“Nothing.”

At least they now knew that it was two very private and hotheaded people in a relationship. That was kind of a common ground?

Their confidence in this romance was diminishing.

When they got back to the hotel that night, Mina was kind of excited about seeing Xanxus’s group again. Even though he had a nasty temper, Xanxus was indeed model level good looking and so were his companions. Damn, was there a physical attractiveness scale test for securities guards now?

Mina had fun at the hot spring with the girls in her class. They were giggling about the usual stuff and none of them attempted to bring up Bakugou’s dating choices since it wasn't just them in the women’s hot springs and the boys on the other side might hear them.

Also, they didn’t want to risk the chances of one of Xanxus’s group accidentally hearing them.

It didn’t really surprise any of them to run into Xanxus’s group in the dining hall again. While there was the option of eating in private rooms, maybe Xanxus was looking forward to seeing his younger boyfriend too, even if they couldn’t do anything together.

Aizawa-sensei and the other two pro heroes were keeping a tighter watch on Bakugou so the blond didn’t go over and serve his boyfriend during dinner. It was still hard to ignore how Bakugou’s attention majorly remained on Xanxus though.

Oh, a green eyed monster had popped up. Mina noticed Midoriya staring intensely at Bakugou but the blond barely paid attention.

Poor Midoriya. The jealousy must be killing him.

Mina saw Uraraka remove the lemon from Midoriya's plate of grilled fish. He probably didn't need the lemon since he was so sour about Bakugou.

A hotel staff came to speak with Best Jeanist about something that he thought the heroes should know and the No. 4 hero walked out of the room with him.

Xanxus wasn't any friendlier than when they saw him at breakfast. Both Squalo and him were dressed sharply in black suits and Bel was nowhere to be seen. The dark haired man seemed to be ticked off about something and Squalo was hissing at him in Italian. It was kind of hard to make out what they were saying since they spoke so fast in a foreign tongue but Mina could guess from Squalo's expression that it wasn't a fun topic. Squalo got up and he stormed towards the waters, leaning against the railing there to cool off a bit.

Mina was reaching for dessert when the lights went out. There were a few scared yelps from the other guests and two separate lights came on in the room.

"Is everybody alright?" Yaoyorozu asked while lifting a lantern.

"We're fine over here," Todoroki answered. There was a small ball of fire in his hand.

"You all stay here, I will go check it out." Gang Orca's voice was closer to the entrance. It might just be a simple power outage considering the buildings on this street were old but Mina and everybody else in class thought it was better to be safe than sorry.

Also…even with the powers out, wasn't it taking way too long for Best Jeanist to come back?

"Eraserhead…*Buzz* Villains…*Buzz* trap…"

Best Jeanist's voice came through the communicator that Aizawa-sensei had strapped onto his belt. It was glitchy and filled with static noises as it cut out.

"All of you stay close together," Aizawa-sensei ordered. Mina could only make out a hazy outline of him in the dimly lit room. "Yaoyorozu–"

His voice stopped abruptly and the lights suddenly came back on. Mina saw her teacher being pinned to the ground by a man in a clown suit. The villain's face was painted chalk white and he had bloody lips. Another villain walked in and fired his machine gun at the ceiling. This one was wearing a giant bunny head but he was dressed just like one of the waiters.

A third villain with a fish head emerged from the waters and scared the guests over there. Half a dozen more climbed out after him too. They were all dressed flamboyantly as some kind of circus or fairytale animal.

"Alright, ladies and gentlemen! This is a robbery so hand over all your valuables and we'll be out of your hair!"

Some kind of hair grew out from the rabbit guy's back and he was able to use those hair like extra hands. They went around taking wallets and watches from the guests. There were only three of them and Mina could see her classmates secretly passing signals with each other. They moved discreetly, trying to shield some of the closer civilian guests behind them and get certain people into position to take down the villains. Mina also knew Aizawa-sensei was waiting for an opening and he'd take out the clown himself.

The villains were yelling about "Liberation" and how good freedom felt. They were whooting and yelling like barbarians as they robbed the dining hall. And then Mina noticed something strange, something that didn't belong.

Xanxus was still eating.

He was seated without a care in the world while the rest of the guests were either hiding under their tables or shaking in their skins. The man ate as if he was in his own little world and that there weren't *villains with giant guns* storming the place.

"What's up with this freak?" one of the villains asked out loud as he approached Xanxus's table. Mina's heart was going to jump out of her throat.

"Don't worry about him," the one in the waiter suit said. "I overheard he's a quirkless loser, just a failed evolution."

The villains were laughing, mocking the quirkless man like his existence was a piece of old gum stuck on the underside of a desk, talking about how useless and disgusting it was for such abnormalities

to still exist.

“He deaf or something then? Hey!” The villain standing closest to Xanxus banged on the table and grabbed the wine bottle. Chugging it, he spat a mouthful of wine directly on Xanxus’s steak.

“Fuck.”

Mina heard Bakugou cursing under his breath.

And all hell broke loose.

“Fucking die, you scums!”

With an angry roar of profanities, food and plates started flying everywhere. Xanxus kicked the villain on the leg and they could all hear the bones snapping crisp clean. It was followed by a scream filled with anguish and Xanxus punched the man who spat in his food in the face. Kicking the table, he sent it flying towards the second criminal. He then took the guns from the fallen villain and started shooting.

Absolutely brutal.

It was a one sided massacre.

Mina was going to be a hero but in the midst of the chaos and raining bullets, she could only dodge and made sure no civilians were injured. Xanxus was a really good shot though. She saw that he didn’t even have to look back to be able to hit his target and every bullet made it into one of the villain’s flesh.

There was a lot of screaming. Aizawa-sensei jumped up and tied the clown up with his capture weapon. He was yelling something but it was drowned out by the sound of rapid fire.

Xanxu’s fighting style was both violent and visceral. He broke bones as if he was snapping twigs and left a trail of bodies that were gasping for air through broken noses and bloody mouths as he emptied all the bullets in the hand gun.

“Xanxus! Stop!” Bakugou ran up to his boyfriend and attempted to wrestle the gun from the man.

“Shut up.”

Xanxus shoved Bakugou to the floor and sat down on the lone remaining chair in the room. Crossing his ankle over his knee, he

leaned back into the chair and closed his eyes, showing that he wasn't listening to Bakugou at all. In fact, when Bakugou tried to say something again, Xanxus threw the emptied gun at him, nearly missing the teen's head. The gun smashed against the ground and Mina had no idea how much force it would actually take to do that but the butt of the gun was completely bent.

As much as Mina was worried about Bakugou, Mina went to help her classmates tie up the villains…actually, that might not be needed. They looked like they needed first aid more than restraints, because even without ropes or shackles, there was no way any of them were going anywhere with those injuries.

Aizawa-sensei looked up at the entrance and Gang Orca came in, pulling another villain behind him. Bel was walking alongside him.

"Eraserhead! Are you all alright?" Gang Orca asked.

"We are…relatively." Aizawa-sensei nodded. It didn't look like any of the guests or students were hurt but they were still calming down from the rush of a scare. "What happened out there and where's Best Jeanist?"

"Seems like this one was the villain who cut the power. When I got there, that boy already had the villain pinned to the ground with a letter opener." Gang Orca pointed at Bel. "Best Jeanist radioed me and said he is waiting for the police with the hotel owner. He was attacked outside the surveillance room. Now, what happened here? I heard a lot of shots."

That was a good question.

Mina looked over at Xanxus. A civilian took down a bunch of villains in record time, without using a quirk. That was both impressive and terrifying.

"You couldn't have let the heroes or the brat handle this fucking mess? Two more minutes and we could have been out of here without having to deal with the cops." Squalo walked over and he was absolutely livid, for the wrong reasons though.

"We had it under control," Bakugou screamed at Xanxus as he climbed back onto his feet.

"It was already a miracle that Boss lasted this long without blowing up." Bel laughed white placing his hands behind his head. He didn't

look scared or particularly bothered by all the bloody and injured men on the ground. “And hey, Boss was nice this time.”

“Wait, he was being *nice*?” Sero was horrified. He stared down at the battered villains and honestly, they looked like Midoriya after his quirk backfired really bad. Their limbs were bent at weird angles and there were parts where the bones were definitely shattered.

Bel only kept laughing and somehow Mina would much rather have a one on one with the creepy clown villain than to hear him laugh again.

On the other side, Bakugou and Xanxus were arguing loudly in Italian while Squalo talked to Aizawa-sensei.

“I need to speak with Xanxus directly. Also, I do not care what your relationship is but I need to ask you to refrain from speaking to my student in that tone.” Aizawa-sensei raised his voice as he glared at Xanxus.

Xanxus scowled. “How I talk to my bitch is none of your business.”

“Xanxus! He’s my teacher!” Bakugou smacked Xanxus on the back of his head. “Stop being a dick!”

“Vaffanculo!” Xanxus grabbed a random knife off the shelf next to him and threw it at Bakugou, who dodged while cursing back.

Bakugou was bristling but Aizawa-sensei motioned for Iida to drag him away. Mina wasn’t sure what happened next because Best Jeanist showed up with the police and they were all asked to cooperate. When she looked around, Xanxus’s group and Aizawa-sensei were all gone.

Bakugou was still fuming though.

“Dude…you alright?” Kirishima questioned carefully.

“Of course I’m fine.” Bakugou leaned his head on his hand while pulling out his phone.

“Um, you sure? Cause back there…”

“It’s fine, Xanxus was just grumpy because the idiots messed with his food.”

Mina didn’t think that was fine. It was quite scary to consider that a partner would scream insults or get violent and toss things whenever

they were unhappy with something. She felt like she should say something about it but she also didn't think Bakugou would listen.

"Bakugou," she said while forcing the blond to look her in the eyes. "If you ever need someone to talk to, I'm always available, okay?"

"What the fuck are you on about, Raccoon Eyes?"

"Just promise me that you'd come find me if you ever need someone to talk to." Mina was serious and Bakugou seemed to be evaluating her for a second before he shrugged her off.

"Sure, whatever. You're being so weird."

It wasn't the reaction that Mina hoped for (actually, she didn't know if this was better) but it was a start. Nobody was hurting her friend on her watch. No matter how hot the Italian was.

Chapter End Notes

> Decided to just post Mina's POV this chap because Midoriya's operation is proving to be a long one. No matter where I stop it just didn't feel right so might as well finish it all and post it as one chap later.
>
> Also, I kind of want Midoriya confronting Xanxus XD but I need to think of a good excuse to make it happen

Chapter 30: Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Midoriya didn't understand how Kacchan could stand the man. Not only was he so much older, Xanxus was also everything the term "despicable" could entail and more.

He was rude, inconsiderate, callous, got a short fuse and was horribly violent. Throwing things at the people, quick to call others names, and ignorant of those around him. Arrogant beyond belief, he was so self centered and treated Kacchan like dirt. The list just went on and on!

Yet Katsuki was simply infatuated with him.

The couple made up after the police scattered. Kacchan looked like he was on the verge of wanting to stab Xanxus but the man pulled him in roughly for a kiss and the angry dynamite ready to explode melted into a puddle. His face was flushed pink and his ears were fully red as he pushed Xanxus away (with less force than he really should have) while Bel laughed in the background.

"That should have been me." Midoriya felt his heart cracking. He didn't understand it and he didn't want to understand it. The pink was such a complimenting color on Kacchan and seeing how Xanxus could cause the blond to make that kind of soft expression so easily was burning Midoriya from the inside out. It absolutely made the green haired teen feral to even be imagining how Xanxus got to lay his disgusting lips and hands all over Kacchan.

"Jealousy is an ugly color on you, Monsieur Midoriya." Aoyama patted Midoriya on the back.

They didn't see Xanxus's group on the last day of their three day field trip, which was kind of a relief because Midoriya was sure he would full cowl the guy if he had to hear Xanxus refer to Kacchan as "my bitch" one more time.

Aizawa-sensei didn't tell them if he ever got the chance to speak with Xanxus in private or what happened after Squalo spoke with the police. When the time came, they were taken back to school on a bus.

Katsuki went back to his room as if everything was normal, like his *quirkless civilian* boyfriend didn't beat the living daylights out of a bunch of villains or call him insulting names. Midoriya had big problems with Xanxus showing Kacchan's wellbeing so little regard and referring to the blond as if he was subhuman or just a sex toy.

God, that was disgusting.

"It's time to devise a plan of Operation: How to End Kacchan's Abusive Relationship And Win Him Over."

Midoriya stood in front of a whiteboard in his dorm room. In order to fit the whiteboard in, he had to move some of his All Might merchandise towards the balcony. His friends sat on the ground or on his bed. Midoriya was grateful that they were here, both to help him plan and to be his moral support because he knew he really needed it.

More importantly, he needed someone to stop him from doing something out right stupid, like punching Xanxus in the face. Although he still very much wanted to do that, his final goal was much more serious: Midoriya was going to ruin Xanxus's relationship with Kacchan.

Okay, that sounded very horrible.

But there was absolutely no better way to put it.

Uraraka opened a bag of chips and she didn't look confident. "Are you sure you want to go forward with the operation?"

"Yes." Midoriya had never been more determined about anything else, other than his wish to become a hero of course. Tapping a marker on the board, he said, "The central problem right now is how are we going to break them up."

Iida distributed orange soda to all of them. Pushing his glasses further up the bridge of his nose, he turned to face Midoriya. "Do you have anything in mind already? I'm not sure about the breaking them up part but it sounds like a major part of your problem is how to make Bakugou see you as a potential date."

"If I know what Kacchan liked about Xanxus, maybe I can use those traits to make myself more attractive to Kacchan." Midoriya thought if he found out what made Kacchan fall in love, he could also use it to his advantage.

"...Xanxus is very different from you, Midoriya." Todoroki coughed in a suspicious manner. He took a sip of the soda to hide his hesitancy. "Not to rain on your parade or drag you down but have you noticed that he's a different style from you?"

More like the complete polar opposite. Midoriya had a baby face and while he wouldn't call himself hideous, he was by no means beautiful or dashingly handsome. He was shorter than Xanxus by at least a head and some more with less defined muscles. While Midoriya's wardrobe composed of T-shirts, hoodies, and jeans, he was pretty sure Xanxus's closet would be filled with expensive suits and branded watches.

"I know that but we're just brainstorming right now." Midoriya wrote down *Pros about Xanxus* on the whiteboard and started filling in the bullet points. "He's obviously very confident."

So much so that he came off as very arrogant and self-centered.

"He's also good-looking," Uraraka pointed out. "The definition of tall, dark, and handsome even with the scars."

Iida pondered while taking chips from the only girl in the room. "Mina was saying the scars made him even more attractive. Adds a… um, what did she call it? Oh! 'Dangerous and wild' vibe. Honestly I do not appreciate the lazy way he wears his shirts or tie but apparently that's what is cool."

Midoriya groaned. The more they talked about Xanxus's appearance was making his insecurities worse. Xanxus was the alpha male type where one glance and people could just feel the testosterone rolling off him.

Still, it was too early to simply give up. He was still growing and he was sure he could build up more muscles before he turned 18.

"Strong," Todoroki added. "He broke a villain's leg with one kick. That's some impressive reflex and physical powers right there."

Midoriya scribbled it down while his friends continued to throw ideas out.

"This is kind of weird but he's very emotionally unavailable? The whole *too cool for love* kind of attitude. And anger issues. Loads of anger issues."

"Yeah, Bakugou seemed to be really into that though. I've never seen

him be so attentive to someone else's moods and be so physically affectionate."

"I find that really weird actually. I thought Bakugou thrive off attention…so why is he so enamored with a guy who is so unresponsive?"

Midoriya would like to know the answer to that too.

"For Xanxus's wealth?" Iida suggested but he quickly shook his head and refuted himself. "No, that didn't sound very Bakugou either. He'd be more the type to earn that money himself."

"Maybe Bakugou just likes dating older guys because they are more mature."

Uraraka looked down at the list and she looked at Midoriya apologetically. "I'd add assertive and dominant there too. This is not looking good for you, Izuku-kun."

Out of what they could think up so far, Midoriya had nothing to do with any of it. He wasn't hot or rich, and he certainly wasn't the stoic or very macho type of mature man.

"It might be easier to just break them up," groaned Midoriya as he deflated down on his chair. "They are doing long distance and he's diabolical in so many ways. It can't be that hard to drive a wedge between them, can it?"

Todoroki poked him on the leg. "That is not very heroic of you, Miodirya."

Now Midoriya felt horrible. Yes, it really wasn't right for him to want to break up a relationship but how could he just stand by and watch the love of his life be talked down to and mistreated like that? He loved Kacchan. Midoriya could never get enough of him and all his life so far, he had been chasing after Katsuki.

"We also don't know much about how they are in private. Maybe the tough guy act is all a front and he's secretly super sappy with Bakugou."

Even Uraraka didn't seem to believe herself after she said that.

"So what is the plan here?" Todoroki tried to bring everybody back to focus, which Midoriya appreciated. "Midoriya is finally going to tell

Bakugou that he likes him?"

"No!" Midoriya yelled and he immediately knew that he was too loud. Flustered, he quickly apologized. "I-I…I don't think it's the right time? Kacchan doesn't even look at me straight, other than when we are sparring during practice."

He also wasn't confident that if he asked Katsuki out right now, he would even stand a chance. Midoriya felt like he would be crushed if he heard a rejection before he even tried something first. Kacchan still saw him as just one of the extras like in middle school. Midoriya wanted to see if he could change Kacchan's impression of him before he attempted any large confessions of love.

This was pathetic. Midoriya knew he had years to tell Kacchan how he felt but he had been too much of a coward to do so. He probably would never have even tried to do anything, except waiting for his feelings to slowly vanish with time, had he not seen how Xanxus was treating Kacchan.

It was abysmal.

Midoriya simply couldn't stand by and do *nothing*.

"Why don't we start with a simpler goal?" Iida took a marker and started writing on the whiteboard. "Let's not work the break up Xanxus and Bakugou angle but just start with how to get Bakugou to notice Midoriya? Baby steps. Maybe if Bakugou realized he has more options out there, he'd dump Xanxus himself."

"That's a good idea," Uraraka agreed. "I can't think of anything on the spot but challenging Bakugou to a match seems to get his attention really fast."

"He's trying to win him over, not get beat up or beat Bakugou up on a daily basis," Todoroki pointed out. "I'm not saying that Midoriya has to change everything he is but maybe he can be more assertive around Bakugou?"

"Be more assertive…" Midoriya sank into thought. It wasn't as difficult to imagine himself standing up to Kacchan as before but he still felt a bit nervous. But Todoroki made sense. Kacchan seemed to like people who stood their own grounds and Midoriya would need to build up the courage to confess to him. Talking to him on a daily basis would help that alot.

“Oh! In that case, why don’t Midoriya dress up a bit too!” Iida motioned wildly with one hand while writing down more notes with his other. “You wear a lot of plain T-shirts, which aren’t bad but I’m sure we can find you something more flattering.”

“It’d be like those Disney movies when the protagonist cleaned up!” Uraraka laughed along and she looked excited. “But I’m not really a fashion expert…”

That was true. Midoriya was fine with his plain and nerdy clothing, Iida dressed like a model student (which Bakugou didn’t really find attractive), and Uraraka wasn’t as invested in men’s fashion. Todoroki admitted that his sister shopped his clothing for him so he was no help either.

It was decided that they needed the rest of the class’s help.

—---

First stop was Yaoyorozu’s room.

Yaoyorozu was surprised to see them but not so shocked at Midoriya’s confession that he liked Bakugou Katsuki.

“Does *everybody* know?” Midoriya groaned out loud while hiding his face behind his hands.

“Pretty much?” Yaoyorozu offered him tea. “I’m sorry if this sounded too blunt but you’re not exactly subtle, Midoriya.”

Midoriya took the tea, just so he could hide his embarrassment behind the teacup. It looked like all of the girls, except Mina who was having a movie night in Kaminari’s room, were all here.

Jirou was reading on Yaoyorozu’s bed and she twirled her earphones around her finger. “Let me get this straight, you came to Momo to ask her if she can tutor you on how to dress better so you can impress Bakugou.”

“Yes, exactly.” Midoriya nodded. Yaoyorozu grew up wealthy and it could be seen from her usual styles that she had taste. His budget for getting a new wardrobe was limited but Midoriya was sure they could find something good for cheap through online shopping.

“Have you ever considered just being yourself?” Tsuyu tilted her head, confused and slightly worried. “You are kind and gentle, a great friend

and listener. Not to mention very detail oriented and analytical. I think you also have a longer personal history with Bakugou too. Compared to the guy who constantly puts down Bakugou, I think you'd be the more ideal choice that Bakugou would come around for."

Midoriya wished that was the case but if that was so, Katsuki would have been with him already and they wouldn't be in this situation. "I don't think being me…or my old self is what Kacchan is looking for in a partner. I wasn't even ever going to tell Kacchan I like him! It's just that, I can't really watch him like this anymore!"

He was too soft-spoken and meager, not the type of man that could sweep Katsuki off his feet or even capture his attention for longer than ten minutes. With the confidence he had gained this past few months, Midoriya hoped he would be able to tell Katsuki how he truly felt and earn the chance to compete with Xanxus for the blond's love.

"Can we get more people to come help?" Hagakure raised her hand. Her voice was light as she tried to lighten the mood. "Honestly, I don't really like that Xanxus guy either but Bakugou ultimately has to be the one willing to call it off. Also, there's only so much we can do to improve your looks, the other half is all about what you do."

Uraraka nodded. "Yeah, a nicely dressed guy is still a creep if he spies on the women's toilets or spat on the road randomly. We need some of the guys to come help you with postures and other stuff."

"I guess so?"

Midoriya was willing to do *anything* to be together with Kacchan. Kacchan was his and he would be sure to kick Xanxus out of the picture with the help of his friends.

They started with his clothing. The girls marched to Midoriya's room and pulled everything out of his closet. They made him put on different outfits where they scored each one and voted out the bad choices.

"Xanxus wears expensive suits but that's not a practical choice for Midoriya since we lived on campus," Yaoyorozu pulled out the suit that Midoriya had. "Let's go for a more casual style. This blazer is nice."

"It can go with these jeans!" Hagakure pointed to a pair of jeans she found on an online shop. "They ship in one day."

They picked his socks, shoes, and commented about how he should style his hair or add a few accessories. Jirou also took out some facial masks and taught Midoriya about skin care routines so he would look glowingly radiant.

Midoriya spent his free time for the next few days going to Shoji about how to appear stoic and calm. The taller teen was very confused at first but agreed to help Midoriya. While they were practicing in front of a mirror, Tokoyami passed by and he joined in on the conversation about staying collected. Midoriya practiced how to keep his expression neutrally cool and how to dip his voice lower in a more confident tone.

“I think you should tell Bakugou what you are planning.” Shoji’s voice came from the mouth on one end of his tentacles. “Cause technically you are planning to insert yourself into a relationship, even if it is a questionable one.”

“I will.” Midoriya knew it was coming. He eventually would have to tell Kacchan how he felt and ask the blond out properly.

Actually, he was already feeling more confident about this. His classmates helped him decide on a few different outfits; there was the sharp business casual look and a more classic bad boy one with more leather. He was working on his demeanor and the way he spoke so he could come off as more assertive or dominant.

Now all they had to do was test it.

2

The halls of UA were cleaned by robots but the students were responsible for keeping a certain level of tidiness. Picking up a few garbage on the ground, Midoriya tossed them into the trash can.

Midoriya glanced over and Kacchan was standing about four lockers down from him in the changing room. The blond had stripped down to his boxers and he was changing into casual clothing since this was the last class of the day.

He would admit that he admired the other boy’s fine figure. There were fantasies that only belonged to the dead of the night, surrounded by the cold silence echoing off the four walls of his dorm but there were also purer admirations that contained simple longing. Training allowed Katsuki to build his muscles and they formed appeasing lines and curves over a lean frame. The blond’s skin was milky white, with

an enticing texture that seemed to be inviting people to touch that ivory surface. But that would be inappropriate and Midoriya was sure Kacchan would blow his head straight through a concrete wall if he ever attempted that.

His guts were burning. It felt as if there was acid melting all of his insides when he thought about how Xanxus might get the chance to touch all of Katsuki whenever and however he pleased. Why not Midoriya? What had Xanxus ever done to deserve all of Kacchan's love and attention that Midoriya felt rightfully belonged to him? After all, Midoriya was the one who had been here from the start. He was there when Kacchan was winning all the competitions or when he was at his lowest. All he had ever done was be nice to Kacchan yet he couldn't even get a smile but the man who yelled insults at the blond could have it all.

It simply wasn't fair.

Fixing his expression, Midoriya closed his locker and revealed what he had been working so hard on with the help of so many people. The girls found him a nice pair of dark jeans that would make his legs seem longer and a more form fitting shirt, which he threw a green blazer over. They switched his usual red sneakers with a nice pair of light brown leather shoes.

"Whoa, looking good Midoriya." An unsuspecting Kaminari was smiling at him and giving him the thumbs up. It was good because his voice drew the attention in the room to Midoriya, including Kacchan's. "Got a date later?"

"No, just trying out something different." It was hard to keep the smile off his face when he saw Kacchan's red eyes landing on him. It felt empowering. Kacchan was looking at him without blowing up or screaming at him, which was a good start.

The rest of the guys gave him some more compliments but Kacchan went back to what he was doing.

"Bro, don't you think Midoriya looks good in his new style?" Kirishima asked as he bumped Kacchan with his elbow.

"It's alright." Kacchan shrugged as he slung his gym bag over his shoulder and left the changing room.

It wasn't the most enthusiastic reaction that Midoriya secretly hoped for but he also knew he was in for the long run. It wasn't rational to

expect Kacchan to suddenly fall madly in love with him just because he changed his outfit.

For the next few days, whenever they had free time, Midoriya would make sure he was nicely dressed and styled his hair before he appeared before Kacchan. He attempted to make small talk, like a simple “Good morning” or “Today’s training was tough”. If Kirishima or the others were around, Midoriya also tried starting conversations about what their plans for the weekend were. Some of their classmates would request permission to go home and visit their parents but Kacchan had never done that.

It might be better if Katsuki wasn’t holed up in his room most weekends. Midoriya had only seen him go out for a run in the morning or make himself something quick to eat before he vanished behind locked doors again. Usually it was just Mineta in front of the TV with a few guys, watching Victoire’s livestream. She was never on for long but Mineta and plenty of her fans bathed in the ten to fifteen minutes that she was on, listening to her talk about books she read recently or trying on new makeup.

Midoriya followed behind Katsuki into the laundry room. Putting his own laundry down, Midoriya opened the washer while glancing at the other teen.

“What the fuck do you want, nerd?” Kacchan gruffed but his voice lacked the usual harshness.

“Nothing.” He had something actually. Midoriya thought about putting it off but he shook that thought out of his head and told himself that he could do this. There was a carefully wrapped gift under the cover of his sheets that he was using to hide it. Katsuki’s birthday had long passed but Midoriya hadn’t had the guts to give him a gift then.

This was a start to amend their relationship, to build it up to be something lovely. Midoriya spent hours picking out a watch that was a bit on the pricey end but looked sleek and came in black and orange like Bakugou’s hero uniform.

He could do this.

If he waited too long, he was going to doubt himself again and hide back into his shell. He waited for too long already. He just wanted Kacchan to smile at him without the hints of malice or mocking jeers.

“Kacchan, I–”

“Bakugou, there’s a package for you!” Kirishima yelled from the hall outside and Katsuki walked out into the common room. The redhead handed him a small box that was about the same size as Midoriya’s gift. “There’s a letter too but it’s in Italian. Was this from Xanxus?”

“It’s probably Squalo or Bel.” Katsuki opened the box, revealing a watch made of gold and jade, something that was both beautiful but also out of Midoriya’s budget. The green haired teen could feel his heart sinking as the class gushed over it.

“This is so cool!”

“Must be expensive too.”

“Is this what the stench of money smells like? I’m addicted.”

Katsuki closed the box and checked the note. A hint of a smile, the kind of soft smile that Midoriya wished Katsuki would use for him, appeared on the edge of his lips and he started going back to his room. “I have to make a call.”

He didn’t even stop to collect his laundry.

Midoriya clenched his gift tight behind his back, suddenly too embarrassed about it to the point where it felt like he was holding a burning piece of coal.

“Midoriya, we have something to ask you.” Sero stopped him when he tried to discreetly move away from the common area. “What’s going on between you and Bakugou?”

“What do you mean?” Midoriya tried to smile. It was hard when his heart felt like it had been petrified into stone, growing too heavy and cold inside his own chest.

“We noticed that you’ve been lingering around Bakugou a lot and you look…well, look at you.” Kaminari pointed to all of Midoriya. From his hair styled with a bit of gel to achieve that woke up fabulous look as the girls put it to his ironed button up shirt and trousers. “Pinning much?”

There was no hiding of his obvious intention. Except that Katsuki seemed to be the only one blind to all of this effort.

A few diagrams and testimonies from his friends later, Midoriya finally managed to explain everything to Kirishima and the rest of the class about what was going on.

“Bro, that’s very sad.” Kirishima placed both his hands on Midoriya’s shoulders, looked at the green haired boy dead in the eyes before he continued, “Like, don’t get me wrong. I think you trying to get your dream guy is very manly but Bakubro just doesn't look interested. It’s not manly to be a homewrecker.”

“He’s head over heels for Xanxus,” Mina whispered from behind Kirishima. “Blasty’s got it bad.”

“That doesn’t mean I don’t have a chance,” Midoriya tried to argue. “And have you seen the way Xanxus treats him? He’s ultra-toxic masculine and just so horrible to everybody including Kacchan in general. I really like Kacchan and I can’t just sit by and watch him suffer through all that.”

His words made everybody else look thoughtful for a moment. They have all seen how Xanxus and Katsuki were to each other and the love felt very one-sided between them. It was also toxic with a lot of screaming and violence, which can’t be healthy or safe.

“Have you considered that Bakugou actually enjoys that kind of relationship?” Sato coughed and he cowered away shyly when all eyes, filled with disbelief, turned on him. “I know this sounds bad and looks bad but maybe the reason why he hasn’t left it is because he really likes the guy and whatever goes on between them is working? Kinda?”

“I think he can do better,” Mina muttered but she shook her head. “It’s got to be his call though, it looks like he knows that this isn’t a typical relationship but he’s not being held against his will or blackmailed into it either. I’d root for you, Midoriya, but this rides a lot on the condition that Bakugou is willing to give you a chance.”

“Same here, sorry bro.” Kirishima backed away too. “We’re not going to encourage him to stay with Xanxus cause that’s obviously sketchy but we won’t be pushing him to be with you either.”

Sero looked sheepish but he also took their side. “Good luck. Maybe you can show him that there are better options out there? But I don’t know how much he would take it to heart. We won’t tell him about your feelings unless you want us to either.”

Kaminari looked between the three of them and Midoriya before sighing. “I’ll give you everything we dug up on Xanxus but it really isn’t much. Hope it helps.”

They were being reasonable. Midoriya also understood their concerns. He was too different from Xanxus and his chances were slim. If Katsuki really was interested, it wouldn’t have taken him this long to make a move or notice Midoriya. There were also a lot of more good looking guys that Katsuki knew so even if the plan was to date him on rebound, the blond had plenty of other choices.

So far, Katsuki remained unimpressed by Midoriya’s fashion change and his lack of patience in chatting with Midoriya was still a persistent problem. Obviously the men around Katsuki could give him way better gifts too so bribing his good favor with materialistic stuff wasn’t an option either.

Still, Midoriya didn’t want to give up. He hadn’t tried *everything* yet.

And if there was one good trait about him was that he was determined about getting what he wanted.

Chapter End Notes

Delusions getting worse in one green broccoli XD

Been thinking about Squalo x Katsuki (not in this main story though) or an extra about Xanxus and Katsuki's first time...IDK, maybe my brain will write something later

Chapter 31: Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

For all his years as an accomplished pro hero, All Might had never found anything more baffling than being an educator.

The teaching about how to be a hero part was the easiest since it mostly was just providing guidance on the procedures that All Might had been repeating for years. He could give pointers about how to escape tricky situations or how to take down villains, even talk in great lengths about all the possible factors to consider when attempting to rescue people in different scenarios. However, that wasn't all a teacher was. All Might was out of his depth when it came to dealing with teenage drama or the more delicate needs of young students.

It might be better if he was teaching at university or college level but UA was a highschool and adolescence was a confusing time for many. Even the future heroes couldn't escape the influence of budding romances and other teenage hormones.

So far, All Might interacted with the hero course students the most. The kids weren't perfect but they were full of potential and kind hearted. Some were a little shy while others more expressive, which was completely normal and All Might was happy to see them grow into fine young heroes with each passing day. He tried hard to make sure all of them felt comfortable and would be able to learn safely.

The only problem was that his protege was exhibiting some intriguing behaviors lately.

When Midoriya started showing up around campus more dressed up, All Might didn't think too much of it. He was young once and he knew how much appearances were high on the list of life priorities at that age. Kids were trying to figure out who they were and fashion could be pretty fun to explore. It was also important because personal style for a hero was also what media and endorsement companies looked for.

What concerned All Might was the way Midoriya was acting while dressed up. At first it was pretty innocent. The boy would attempt to

make small talk with Bakugou, which was something that All Might was actually delighted to see. He knew Midoriya had a long rivalry consisting of complicated emotions towards Bakugou. While Bakugou wasn't interested in making friends, just seeing the tension between them easing a little was better than nothing. Midoriya tried to do nice things for Bakugou, like offering to help him bring out the trash or asking if he wanted some of the snacks or food.

Then it escalated.

The pleasant smiles turned into cold scowls and his tone was no longer nice or friendly. Midoriya strutted about with the top few buttons of his shirt unbuttoned and his hands in his trouser pockets. It looked like he was going for the European bad boy look, the classic kind in private academies who could have their way with any girl with a flip of his hair. He also adorned his hair with a few beads and black feathers.

All Might felt old. He didn't really understand the trends these days.

And then there was the incident the No.1 pro hero witnessed that really had him worrying.

Bakugou was walking towards the trashcan when he almost bumped into Midoriya. There were desks on either side of them so the aisle was narrow.

"Get out of the way, trash," Midoriya said.

"What the fucking hell did you call me?" Bakugou snapped back immediately, angered by the insult and commanding tone. The blond teen had always been a force to be reckoned with. He was fueled by determination that could burn down the world…if that temper of his didn't get to it first.

"I said get out of the way," repeated Midoriya with more force behind his words. What was this? A belated rebellious phase or just finally finding the guts to reciprocate the anger.

Small embers sparked in Bakugou's palm. "Are you looking for a fight?"

This was turning into something that All Might both didn't understand and was too confused about if he should intervene or not. In the end, he stopped both boys before it got physical and pulled Midoriya to a small empty office.

All Might deflated back to his thinner form and coughed. The oversized suit hung loosely on him as he sat down.

“Young Midoriya, why did you provoke Bakugou?” he asked while mentioning for Midoriya to sit as well. It was concerning because he could tell the green haired teen was actively initiating a confrontation and forging a hostile atmosphere, which was uncharacteristic of him even if he was upset.

Midoriya sat down. He still sat the proper way with his knees close together and his hands on his lap. The boy looked a bit sheepish and also embarrassed.

All Might expected to hear an answer along the lines of “letting Bakugou know how it felt to be called names” or something similar. He wasn’t expecting a long rant about all of Midoriya’s romantic troubles. He was teaching Class B at the time and while he heard about the robbers, All Might wasn’t aware of Bakugou’s older boyfriend. From what Midoriya said, this Xanxus character really did sound like trouble.

“So all this,” All Might said while pointing to Midoriya, “is all for catching Young Bakugou's attention and trying to make yourself more attractive in his eyes?”

The boy nodded.

“My boy, I do not think provoking the person you like by riling them up with anger is going to give you an advantage over his current boyfriend. That man didn’t sound nice and you being worse than him is not good for Bakugou either.” All Might was no expert in love but even he felt that was the wrong way to go about courting someone. “Also, even if he did dump Xanxus for you, isn’t it kind of unfair to the both of you that you are pretending to be someone you’re not?”

“...I guess.” Midoriya looked more upset now. His gaze casted down to the ground in shame.

Domestic and relationship issues were often filled with gray areas that were tricky for the law to tackle. Every relationship was different and not all victims wanted to come forward or even thought of themselves as victims. People were different in their habits, age, body sizes, and all other factors so it would be absurd to label every atypical interaction as abuse or problematic. They couldn’t simply say a pair of husband and wife didn’t love each other if they slept in different beds at night or got loud in an argument over politics.

All Might could see why Midoriya and the others worried about Bakugou's love life. To be honest, he did too upon hearing how the older man treated Bakugou but even a pro hero's authority had its limits. He couldn't just arrest a foreigner before he committed a crime and it wasn't like All Might was there to catch Xanxus red handed about hitting Bakugou or acting in a threatening way. If they went by that standard, All Might would have to arrest Bakugou first for the blond's confrontational and bombshell nature.

Relationships were not All Might's specialty but he felt like he had a duty to at least cheer his protege up.

"Does Bakugou know you like him?"

"I haven't told him yet."

"Do you plan on telling him?"

Midoriya paused, looking a bit timid. "...I suppose. I haven't worked up the courage to do so yet. Also, Kacchan doesn't seem to like me much."

"Young Midoriya, I think Bakugou is misunderstanding your efforts currently. Maybe it is time you let him know how you truly feel instead of beating around the bush and hope he magically knows where you are coming from." All Might smiled warmly. He couldn't provide advice on romance but he knew friendship and how being sincere with people always worked better than deception. "Being truthful with each other is an important keystone to any relationship, whether it is romantic or not."

Midoriya perked up slightly, seeming to be taking All Might's words into consideration.

"You have been harboring strong emotions for him for a while and I can see that it is eating you on the inside. Although misdirect, you are trying hard. Young Bakugou would probably appreciate it more if you are honest with him. More importantly, he can't say yes if you never asked. I understand that you feel nervous about a confession but no matter how Bakugou responds, it doesn't undermine what a brave and wonderful young man you are. If it did end up being a no from him, at least you won't be regretting about all the what ifs."

The boy stood up and reached over the table to hug All Might. "I'll try. Thank you."

All Might patted him on the back. Ah, young love. It was a mesmerizingly beautiful thing. As Midoriya's mentor, he simply wished that the boy would be able to live without regrets.

But he did look forward to hearing good news from Midoriya soon.

2

Midoriya applied to go home for the weekend. It had been a while since he saw his mom in person and he wanted to prepare before he finally confessed to Katsuki.
Also, it was getting hard to stay in the same dorm with the blond.

Midoriya loved Kacchan. He had kept this love repressed all these years and now his emotions were like a flood breaking through a dam. Maybe some would describe this as pure idolization that was borderlining on becoming an obsession but he knew it was love. The dreams before he knew of Xanxus's presence had mostly been innocent, yet now he felt something much more complicated a lot more intensely.

The love was still there but the fire of lust burned him too. It was hard to ignore that primal urge when they were wrestling each other during training. He couldn't help but wonder how it would feel to lay his hands on that plump round ass or how his hands could fit around that little waist. He desired to be able to rut in deep and all of these dirty thoughts embarrassed him.

That was usually when the tiny voice in his head would whisper about how Xanxus probably got to do everything that Midoriya could only fantasize about. Katsuki would lay down and spread his legs for that man, wouldn't he?

Midoriya dreamt of things that weren't his and when he woke up, he just felt empty.

The reality was too cruel.

Mineta had secretly slid him some magazines and website links with a smirk. "Maybe Bakugou's into that."

There was no further explanation. Midoriya felt disgusted at himself for opening them up. There were very graphic porn featuring heterosexual couples and they were performing atypical sexual acts. Some had leather and chains while others featured toys that Midoriya never knew existed before. One partner was always more dominant in

these, taking control and bathing in the worship and adoration of the more submissive one. They were tied down, helpless against a strong hold or restraints as they dived into a sea of lust and pleasure.

It was horrible of him to imagine Kacchan submitting to him, offering himself up with great enthusiasm and love but his body was so honest that he got hard whenever the thought popped up.

Midoriya got rid of the magazines and deleted his browser history before he went home. His mom greeted him in her usual caring way and made him all his favorite foods. On Sunday, Midoriya got on a train headed to Namimori.

He had gotten Sasagawa's contact info from Kirishima and he asked the boxer boy if he could help set up a meeting with Sawada for Midoriya. Sasagawa was kind of confused but he agreed.

Sawada was waiting for Midoriya at the train station with his friends. If possible, Midoriya didn't want so many people to know about his plans but he would swallow the discomfort if it meant helping him perfect his confession.

They went to a sushi restaurant owned by the black haired teen–Yamamoto's–dad. The sushi was good and the place had that reminiscent old time feel with all the traditional wooden decorations.

"You want to date Bakugou-kun?" Sawada "That's very–"

"Suicidal," Gokudera finished for him. The silver haired boy was dressed like a punk delinquent with all of his silver skull rings and chains. His green eyes landed on Midoriya. "Absolutely suicidal and I recommend you find a therapist or an optician to get your eyes checked out first, maybe both. Both would probably be better."

Yamamoto's laugh was dry as he squeezed Gokudrea's shoulder. "What Gokudera's trying to say is that, um, Bakugou is already in a relationship. Isn't it kind of impolite to be trying to steal someone else's boyfriend?"

It was but Midoriya had a good reason for it. "I know that it's not right but I don't want to regret down the line thinking if we could have been together if I had just been a bit braver and asked. I've liked Kacchan since before I can remember and it's killing me to not do anything while he got away."

Gokudera's lips twitched but Yamamoto slapped a hand over his

mouth. “Gokudera, I just remembered that Dad needs some help moving a few boxes in the back. Let’s go.”

He dragged Gokudera off with him. Sawada apologized on their behalf and scratched his neck nervously. “I’m sure you’re a great guy, Midoriya-san. But Bakugou’s boyfriend is a bit…let’s just say he really doesn’t like people touching what’s his.”

“You know Xanxus?”

Blinking away some confusion, Sawada nodded. “Xanxus is technically my uncle.”

So maybe this was how Kacchan met Xanxus. The kid he tutored had a hot Italian uncle.

Midoriya swallowed a piece of fish. “So you know what Xanxus is like.”

Sawada didn’t even try to hide his fear. “Yeah, he’s scary.”

“Do you know that he treats Kacchan horribly too?” Midoriya explained how he witnessed Xanxus throwing stuff at Kacchan and calling him names. The lack of gentleness and care was simply mind blowing.

However, Sawada’s reaction wasn’t what Midoriya was expecting. The brown haired boy with soft features only stared at him with a constipated look. “I want to agree with you but I’m sure there’s more to Xanxus and Bakugou’-kuns relationship than meets the eyes. They are complicated.”

“That doesn’t justify abuse.”

Sawada frowned and his voice turned a bit harder, becoming more questioning. “So the reason for you to ask Bakugou-kun out is to save him from a bad relationship?”

“Not just that. I really do like Kacchan and I know I can treat him so much better. He shouldn’t have to put up with such low standards of what love is.” Midoriya closed his eyes, remembering how every time he saw Bakugou smile it made his chest ache, of how he longed to be the one that brought the other boy happiness. “That is why I need your help figuring out how to confess to Kacchan.”

There were so many ways to declare love. Chocolates and flowers,

love letters, and all the other stuff. Midoriya wasn't sure which method Kacchan would prefer.

"...I think you should just tell him in private. Make it simple, no special candles or chocolates or anything fancy." Sawada scratched his head, unsure of his own answers. "Just, um, don't make a scene?"

That was odd advice but since Kacchan was a private person, Midoriya thought it made sense. However, he could also feel how little confidence Sawada had about this working out. They talked a bit more, with Midoriya asking about Xanxus. It was better to know his enemy, right?

When they finished talking, Gokudera and Yamamoto came out from behind the curtained door leading to the kitchen. Gokudera looked slightly ticked off but Yamamoto just smiled. They saw Midoriya out onto the street and gave him directions about which way was the fastest back to the train station.

"No crowding allowed."

A voice came from behind them and Midoriya saw a black haired boy standing behind them with a pair of metal tonfas. He was in a school uniform even though it was the weekend and his bangs were a bit long. His eyes were sharp and his skin pale.

Sawada flinched and held his hands up in a defensive motion immediately. "Hibari-senpai! We're not crowding! We're just helping Midoriya-san plan his love confession to Bakugou-kun."

"You and the carnivore?" Hibari scanned Midoriya over and while he made no further comments, it wasn't hard to tell that he thought this must be a joke without humor.

Hibari.

This was the boy who took down a Nomu back during the training camp? Midoriya thought Hibari looked a little thin and it was hard to imagine him having the physical powers to defeat Nomu without a quirk.

Namimori was odd too. Midoriya had been here for hours and he had yet to see a hero patrolling. There only seemed to be a lot of middle schoolers with the old delinquent airplane hairstyle.

Hibari walked away. "Hurry up and go back to UA then."

Midoriya knew he couldn't stay long. The only thing that confused him the most was that before they said goodbye, Yamamoto passed Midoriya a full box of tissues and said to take it home as a souvenir.

What a strange little town.

—---

Bakugou was the only one in the common kitchen.

Midoriya took a deep breath. He could do this. It was time for him to be honest with who he was and confront his feelings. Instead of trying to be someone else, he chose to be just him tonight. No fancy cologne or accessories, he just cleaned himself up and dressed up a little in the type of clothing he was most comfortable with. So no ironed pressed trousers or tie, just him in a nice pair of jeans and a clean green shirt that complimented his hair.

"Hi Kacchan," he said with a smile despite how fast his heart was pounding. "I have something to tell you."

Katsuki didn't look up from chopping vegetables. "Talk."

The response was short and contained little warmth but it was permission.

"I really like you and I think you should ditch Xanxus and date me instead."

There. The truth was out and it dropped like a bomb.

"Huh?" Katsuki placed the knife down heavily as he looked up, staring right at Midoriya. There was disbelief on his face, as if he couldn't believe his ears. "The fuck?"

"I–I really like you since we've been kids and I've been keeping this crush a secret for years because you don't seem interested in dating. Now that I know you are open to the option of it, I wanted to ask you to give me a chance. The weird stuff I've been doing lately with calling you names and such…I've been going about it all wrong and I'm sorry. I just wanted to get your attention. If you give me a chance, I can show you that I will treat you much better than Xanxus ever would."

"Don't fuck with me, Deku." Katsuki looked angry at Midoriya's words. "This is not funny."

“It’s not a joke and I’m not messing with you,” Midoriya stressed, growing bolder with his confession. “You are amazing and don’t deserve to be treated like dirt. I know this is out of the blue but I’d never be able to forgive myself if I didn’t at least try. You’re important to me and I love you and I’d like to take you out on a date this Friday night.”

“No.” Kacchan swept all the vegetables into a plastic container and shoved it into the fridge. “I am not going on a date with you.”

Midoriya felt the coldness from the rejection washing over him. As he felt moisture gathering in his eyes, suddenly he understood why Yamamoto gave him a box of tissues. Steeling himself, Midoriya kept his head high and maintained eye contact.

“But you’re okay with Xanxus trashing over you like that?” Midoriya had absolutely no idea why someone as proud as Kacchan would be willing to lower his head in front of a jackass like Xanxus. To allow the man to degrade him and act so horrible towards him. Maybe Mineta was right, Kacchan was a masochist. “He’s a lot older and is it really alright for you to be tied down with one guy when we’re so young? I’m not asking you to cheat, just to explore your options a bit. There are plenty of people who wouldn’t yell if they didn’t get their way or physically assault their co-workers.”

Katsuki snapped at him immediately. “Stop talking shit about my boyfriend. Just because you’ve liked me for years doesn’t mean I owe you a date. I do not cheat and I will not be calling a break with Xanxus to *explore my options*. I don’t care who else is out there. I want Xanxus and only Xanxus. You’re not him. End of discussion.”

Midoriya tried to plead with him but Katsuki shoved him away.

“Don’t. Touch. Me.”

The threat came in a low hiss filled with anger and disgust. Midoriya was disappointed and the despair sank in. He knew the answer but he asked. He should let go now and accept it.

But his heart was aching, sharp pain tore it apart while his voice went numb inside his throat. Kacchan was walking away like usual. He was always walking away from Midoriya. No matter how hard Midoriya tried to catch up, the distance between them only grew wider.

It was reckless and impulsive and absolutely wrong but Midoriya saw red when he thought about how his unattainable prize was just

another man's "trash". Kacchan had never looked at him right or acknowledged him as an equal. Those lips that spewed nothing but hurtful words at him would happily kiss another man and murmur sweet love.

Midoriya's heart was breaking.

In a desperate attempt to convince Katsuki, to make him *stay,* Midoriya grabbed the other teen's wrist. Green electricity sparked along his skin as his gaze locked with a pond of liquid ruby.

Their lips almost touched but the cool touch of metal came first on Midoriya's mouth.

"Go fuck yourself," Kacchan spat as his fist came for Midoriya's face.

—---

They both got in trouble.

Katsuki didn't skin Midoriya's face off with a knife but Aizawa-sensei still lectured him on the use of dangerously sharp objects in a brawl. Of course, he already gave an equally (if not even sterner) lecture to Midoriya beforehand.

"He tried to kiss me without my permission!" Kacchan screamed in a voice that was way too loud and Midoriya was sure all their classmates in the common area could hear. The embarrassment made him cringe.

This was all his fault. He should have controlled himself better.

"I'm sorry, Kacchan…" he tried while swallowing hard. It was difficult since there was a giant bruise on his left cheek and he would pull on the injured muscles whenever he tried to talk.

"Don't call me that!"

The blond was absolutely steaming. He was so mad that he refused to even sit next to Midoriya while Aizaw-sensei dealt with the situation.

"Midoriya, what were you thinking?" Aizawa-sensei rubbed the bridge of his nose in a tired fashion. "I do not remember teaching any of you this kind of behavior is okay."

Truth was, he wasn't thinking. His body just moved on its own, desperate to convey how much he loved Kacchan.

“Thinking? Yeah, he was thinking with his dick that was what it was,” sneered Katsuki. “I told him I don’t want to date him and he’s the one who can’t handle rejection. The whole fucking world doesn’t cater to you just because you’re trying your best, disgusting creep.”

Out of all the bruises and scraped skin, the words hurt the most. Midoriya fell into silence as his heart bled out.

“Bakugou, stop please.” Aizawa-sensei shook his head.

“He–”

“I know you’re mad but just go back to your room. I’ll talk to Midoriya.”

The blond teen glared at Midoriya before he stomped off. The wood groaned loudly under his feet and no one in class dared to approach him. That night, Midoriya received a punishment of detention for the next week. He also wasn’t to set foot on Bakugou’s dorm floor and he would not be paired with Bakugou in training, both in a team or against each other for the next while.

The whole night sucked.

Aizawa-sensei didn’t start the punishment tonight, which was probably a pity move because Midoriya was on the verge of tears and he needed some time to tend to his broken heart. Yes, he did end up using Yamamoto’s tissues as he wept in his room. His friends came by but he didn’t have the energy to let them in. In the end, they left him ice cream, hot tea, and cookies outside his door.

They were great friends.

But Midoriya still dreaded going into the classroom tomorrow morning. It was going to be horrible no matter what. Honestly, he didn’t know what he was expecting either. He knew his advances would have gotten shot down in an instant but he still had hope.

Maybe the only good thing out of tonight was that he overheard Aizawa-sensei saying he needed to meet with Katsuki and his parents about Xanxus.

Chapter End Notes

I'm having fun, adding some magic of delusional Midoriya (ノ＞ω＜)ノ :｡･:*:･ﾟ’★,｡･:*:･ﾟ’☆

And the first slap to the broccoli's face is done. We shall have the Bakugous next and another slap to Midoriya's face is lined up pretty soon after. Unless I think of something better and need to shuffle the events a bit.

(*□ᗜ□*)/ᵗʰᵃᑎᵏ ʏᴏᴜ* for all the comments and kudos!

Chapter 32: Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

> WARNING: Everything is implied but note this chapter could be trigger for some readers. Bad parenting and a complete ignorance and disregard of what Katsuki thinks involved.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A mid afternoon call from her son's school on Wednesday pulled Mitsuki out of planning for the next catwalk. Aizawa, Katsuki's homeroom teacher, was not very frank with her on the phone, just that the school had *things* they needed to discuss about Katsuki.

Mitsuki got her husband because it was probably better to have them both present so if it was anything serious, they would both be in the loop. She sort of expected it to be a meeting about her son's preferred vocabulary or abrasive nature, which she had to confess that part of it was due to her. He inherited her temper after all. They were both the same kind of fiery spitfire and they butted heads often like bulls fighting for dominance. It wouldn't be the first time she had been called to school because Katsuki got into a fight or said something inappropriate.

But that didn't mean she didn't care for her son.

Katsuki was seated in a chair in front of the Principal's desk, looking gloomy and would rather be anywhere but here. She should be berating him for giving his teachers attitude and not even turning around to greet his own parents but the more sensible part of her decided against it.

They have an audience in this room after all and some things were better dealt with behind closed doors.

"I want to start by saying that Bakugou is not physically ill or in any trouble with the school. There is no observed decline in his grades or any other issues of the sort either." Principal Nedzu was the one who greeted them and Mitsuki immediately felt something was off. A small problem wouldn't require a private in-person meeting with the principal.

"If he's not in trouble then forgive me for being blunt: Why are we here?" Mitsuki crossed her legs. They still had a lot of work to do for

the upcoming show. While she wouldn't be on the runway this time, she was preparing the stage for them and there were still operational issues that needed to be worked out.

Her son was an independent child and excelled in anything he did. He never needed too much guidance, which often gave Mitsuki contradicting feelings. On one hand, she was glad and proud but sometimes she also didn't feel needed as a mother.

Principal Nedzu lifted a paw. "It has come to our attention that Bakugou seemed to be making some questionable choices in the field of relationships."

"Relationships?" Masaru repeated but it wasn't an explanation that was so far fetched. "Yes, our son comes off very strong, which might scare people off and despite how loud he is, he is actually pretty reserved, or introverted."

"Yes, he has a bit of difficulty in making friends," Mitsuki added. "He can get hyper focused on one goal and forget there are other important things in life too."

Katsuki always had a group of people to surround himself with. Mitsuki knew her boy was like the king of the jungle amongst the neighborhood kids. Girls started giving him love letters in middle school and he did have her looks so it wasn't surprising if people found him physically attractive. She hadn't seen him bring home anybody though and it generally didn't look like he was interested in dating. Katsuki was more into training than chatting on the phone for hours or going out on dates.

Mitsuki was also painfully aware of something darker. Her child didn't see the other kids that flocked to him as equals, or rather, he was treating them as NPCs in a game. He handed a clerk money to buy stuff, did his part when told, joked with classmates, said thank you to teachers or the local elders living nearby…everybody had a script and a role that he never diverged from. They were not *people* whom he opened his heart to or genuinely liked. He just did the polite things and forgot about each interaction once it was over. Katsuki didn't bother to remember their names or actively care who was flanking his side.

They all just passed by in his life and he was attached to no one, unable to foster a deep meaningful friendship or another kind of bond.

That was what scared Mitsuki.

It made her question if there was something wrong with her boy. Why couldn't he be like the other kids more? Was this a reflection of her failure as a mother? Why was he staring at the world with such empty eyes like nothing here could ever catch his interest?

She had been happy when she realized her son was interacting with people his age well after highschool started. The kids in his class included him and weren't just mindlessly praising him like the people before did. Sawada looked like a nice kid, reminded Mitsuki a little of her husband and Izuku with his soft spoken nature. Dino was more of a surprise because of his background. The young head of the Cavallone family was a potential big client and she was more than thrilled to learn that Katsuki managed to be on good terms with him.

"No, I'm afraid we are not here about his relationship with his peers. It is about his boyfriend."

"His fucking what now?" Mitsuki quickly apologized for her stunned outburst. She wasn't expecting that and judging from his expression, neither was her husband. A boyfriend? At his age? Maybe it wasn't so uncommon these days but this was her son they were talking about. The child who would rather sleep at 8PM than go out and watch a movie with friends.

She glanced at Katsuki, who remained basically emotionless besides a slight flinch when he heard her raise her voice.

Masaru sat forward slightly. "Okay, our son is gay…we're just learning about this now and I can see why he might have been nervous about coming out to us. Is there a problem with him dating though? I don't believe there was a rule against dating in your school handbook."

"Of course not, UA is very understanding in how young people would be interested in pursuing love. It is a part of growing up after all and we do not condemn relationships of any sexual orientation on this campus, unless it is causing issues with the students' health or studies." Principal Nedzu offered them tea. He spoke slowly and in a confident manner. "We are very open and inclusive. As educators, it is our duty to nurture the next generation of bright minds but we are not entitled to police young love in such discriminatory fashion. Is there a problem on your end about Bakugou's preference?"

"No, of course not." Mitsuki frowned. They weren't such backward conservatives. They worked with plenty of people who weren't heterosexual or loved to include more than it. Beauty was in the eye

of the beholder and it wasn't uncommon to see love spark in odd places. She just hadn't imagined her boy would be gay. Like most Japanese parents, she sort of expected Katsuki to bring home a girl one day and start his own family.

A girl would have been preferred since most Asian and middle east countries still held certain biases but she didn't think it was the end of the world for Katsuki to be gay either. They could still work with this, just from a different angle. If anything, so long as they played their cards right and got the PR team on one page, it could win them a lot more devoted clients and good popularity.

Principal Nedzu nodded. "With that said, Aizawa-sensei has brought to my attention that Bakugou's choice in romantic interest is a bit worrying. Are you two aware of a man by the name of Xanxus?"

"Wait, a *man*?" Implying adult human male. A grown man was dating her son? "What are you doing kissing a creepy old guy? How many times have I told you the internet is filled with these creeps?"

She smacked him on the back of his head.

"He's only twenty four!" he shouted.

"That's still more than half a decade older!"

They were glaring at each other and the air was tense. Mitsuki had no idea when some guy had sneaked into her son's life and yes, she was mad at him for not telling her or Masaru. They were his parents, they shouldn't be blindsighted about such important things! Who was he? Where did he live? What did he do for a living? Too many questions swirled inside her head.

Their brand had a reputation to keep and maintaining it meant predicting all the ways an attack could come from. Ethics, product quality, their private lives…all of these factored into it and they needed to be prepared in case of emergencies.

Mitsuki didn't like surprises. Absolutely not.

"Age is not the only thing I find concerning," Aizawa spoke slowly and Mitsuki felt his gaze landing on the hand she used to smack Katsuki. "He repeatedly called Bakugou *'trash'* and exhibited violent tendencies."

He emphasized the "violent tendencies" portion while staring directly

at Mitsuki, which made her uncomfortable. She was no child and she didn't like what he was insinuating. Katsuki needed a firm hand in handling or he would have grown off the rails long ago with all his attitudes and lack of empathy.

She knew her child. She gave birth to him and fed him and clothed him for all these years. Nobody could tell her how to best deal with him.

"What kind of violent tendencies?" Masaru was suspicious but he turned to the blond teen with more worry. "Katsuki, are you hurt?"

"No. Xanxus is rough around the edges but he's not as bad as they are making him out to be."

That was a weird description to hear her son use on another person. "Are you saying your teachers dragged us out of work for no reason at all? Where did you even meet this shady guy? Wait, are you starting the fights with him on purpose?"

She wouldn't be surprised. It wasn't the first time her son had an outburst for attention. He had also been a dramatic child who argued with anything that moved.

"This is absolutely stupid!" Katsuki got up from his chair and his shoulders were tense as his back arched slightly like a spooked cat. "You haven't even met him yet and you're already judging him. This is why I didn't want to tell you in the first place!"

"We wouldn't be suspicious of him if you had been open about it from the start! Would it kill you to reply to some of our text messages or take a minute to call us?"

"How could I? You're always so fucking busy that I probably talk to your assistants more than I do with you in a month!"

"We do send you stuff, you are the one who never replies or makes an effort to keep the conversation going," Mitsuki hissed as she kept her temper in check. It was hard to foster a bond with someone so unresponsive. It was like trying to warm a giant block of ice, cold and painful with no gain or progress in sight at all. "What are you doing dating so young anyways? We're not paying for you to come to school just for you to slack off."

"I am not slacking off. My grades are still top notch."

“That’s all you got going for you, isn’t it?” Her child was self centered and lacked social skills. It wasn’t that he shied away from attention or was nervous talking to people, she knew he could do it. He simply doesn’t *want* to.

“I think we should get back to the topic at hand,” Aizawa said in a calm but…Mitsuki wouldn’t call it commanding but there was definitely a heavy undertone of authority behind his words. “As this is a private matter, the school doesn’t have authority unless there is significant cause for concern or immediate threats. We will cooperate with how your family has decided to deal with this situation.”

How do they want to deal with this? Mitsuki would like to take her heel to the face of this Xanxus guy. That was how they should handle this. She felt Masaru laying a hand on hers and squeezing lightly. The brown haired man looked at Principal Nedzu and Aizawa. “If I may, I think we would like to get to know Katsuki’s boyfriend in private before we decide on anything. There is a reason why our Katsuki had chosen him and although the circumstances are suspicious, I don’t want to condemn him right away.”

Maybe there was a misunderstanding. Mitsuki could practically hear her husband’s unfinished words. He was always an optimist and willing to trust the good in people first. However, it was also a smart move. If there was something bad going on, they would like to resolve this under the table instead of bringing it to court and get the media’s attention. What would people think if they knew a rising hero was the victim of relationship issues with an older man or involved with such scandals? Also, Mitsuki absolutely didn’t want to hear her work associates telling her how sorry they were about it all, how hard it must be or deal with all the pitiful stares.

Her son wasn’t weak or a victim.

She wouldn’t let him be such a pitiful story.

“You want to meet him?” Katsuki raised his voice uncharacteristically.

Mitsuki arched an eyebrow questioningly. It was strange to see her son having such explicit emotions, other than anger and spite of course. Sometimes she would look at him and feel as if he didn’t have any emotions or could understand complicated feelings. “Is there a problem?”

“He’s busy with work.”

“If he’s half as serious about this relationship, he will make some damn time.”

They would assess him. If this Xanxus was just another white loser with a yellow fever then she could probably send him packing with a bit of money. Katsuki would not like the break up but he’ll get over it. It wasn’t like highschool romances lasted long anyways. She would be doing him a favor by cutting loose the bad ties weighing him down. On the other hand, even if the guy had a bit of money and didn’t want to go, it probably wouldn’t be too hard to threaten him away since they had a wide connection.

“Should we continue discussing the problematic behaviors Aizawa-sensei witnessed then?” Principal Nedzu caught on quickly. Mitsuki wasn’t sure how she felt about that.

“Not today. We will be in contact once we meet Xanxus,” Masaru politely laid out their plans. “I don’t want our judgment to be clouded…which seems to be what Katsuki is primarily concerned about.”

“This is my number if you ever need to discuss things further,” Aizawa said while giving him a business card with both the printed school’s number and a handwritten phone number. Mitsuki thought he didn’t look too happy about their decision to delay making a judgment call but he stayed professional.

“Katsuki, can you tell us how you met Xanxus then?” asked Masaru, trying to at least gain some preliminary knowledge about what they were getting into. “How long have you been dating? Who is he and all the basics please.”

Mitsuki was also curious. She looked at her son and she saw his expression turning rigid, back into the same indifference that he wore constantly which brought a flame of anger to her heart.

“We met on one of the business trips you took me with you to Europe. Then I started tutoring Tsunayoshi during the last year of middle school and found out Xanxus is his uncle. Reconnected and we have been dating since then.” Katsuki kept everything short. “He lives in Sicily and runs a security firm that’s a branch of his dad’s business.”

That didn’t sound too bad but Mitsuki only got more suspicious. A decent man wouldn’t be agreeing to date a minor. Also, a security personnel in Sicily? Mitsuki knew the mafia were rampant there and that the top security guards made good money and had lots of

connections but the risk was also high. She thought Katsuki needed someone more stable. A traditionally gentle wife would be acceptable and so would another powerhouse hero, who would spice up the gossip just right. A long distance male lover with such demanding work on the other hand…it just made her son come off as frivolous and not serious in his relationships, which wasn't the best look since he was already so abrasive.

Mitsuki glanced at her husband and she saw the same understanding in the man's eyes.

They had to get rid of Xanxus, one way or another.

Also, she really needed to have a *private* talk with Katsuki about his dating choices. What was he thinking hiding secrets and picking such distasteful dates? She taught him better than that. Mitsuki had no problem with a gay son but she did have issues with him sabotaging his own image. The boy was shooting himself in the foot. Honestly, she wouldn't even care much if he was dating his peers, somebody his age or even a senpai a year or two for crying out loud.

Even Izuku, the boy she had watched grow up with Katsuki, would have been the much better choice at a puppy love story. Yes, certainly much better.

2

Things got awkward in school.

"Not cool man," Krishima slumped down next to Midoriya on the sofa in the common area. "You shouldn't be throwing yourself at Bakugou."

"Yeah, he already said no." Sero slid into the spot on the other side of Midoriya, sandwiching him in on the couch.

Midoriya internally groaned. He knew what he did was bad and he was so ashamed of it so he didn't blame his classmates for acting like thugs attempting to threaten people. "I wasn't thinking and I know it was bad. I should apologize to Kacchan…if he's willing to hear me."

"No can do, he's with Mina and the girls." Kaminari angled the TV right in front of Midoriya. "And the rest of us have been kicked out, except for Sato to bring in cake and Koda if he went as his pet rabbit's plus one."

Midoriya knew that much. Kacchan had refused to speak with him for the past three days already. “What is that?”

“It’s a video of how consent is tea with a three hour long documentary on sexually based offenses in the criminal justice system.” Sero opened a pack of chips and passed Kirishima some snacks. “You don’t force tea down someone else’s throat and next time before your body moves on its own, let’s see if your subconscious can stop it by remembering the possible consequences.”

“We’ll watch it with you, bro.” Kirishima smiled at the green haired boy. “And Tokoyami and Shoji are grabbing Mineta. He definitely needs it too.”

That was a low dig but Midoriya totally deserved it. He leaned back into the sofa and watched as Dark Shadow came down from the stairs and dropped a bound Mineta in front of the T.

It was a horrible three hours.

Midoriya felt he was thoroughly punished but that would be up to Katsuki to decide. When he was finally let go, he escaped back to his room and laid down on the bed exhausted. He was still grieving over how crushed his heart was but he understood that he should stop. His advances weren’t getting him anywhere and he suspected that Tsuna’s group all knew it was going to end this way.

That would explain the tissues.

He tried to go to class and pretend everything was normal. That his heart wasn’t shattering again every time he looked at Katsuki. It was sort of working, with how he turned to focus on his training and spending more time discussing OFA with All Might.

But that didn’t fully take the pain away.

When it got too loud inside his head at night, he would go for a run around the dorm. He got special permission from the teachers, who thought it was better for him to spend his energy on something less, well, having to deal with Katsuki directly.

It wasn’t really helping but at least Midoriya could sleep a bit easier from being so exhausted. However, before he went out tonight, he got a call from Aunty Mitsuki.

“Izuku-kun, how are you doing?” her voice was a bit tired but still

friendly and sweet. “I’m so sorry to call you out of the blue like this but I’ve been hearing some things about you and Katsuki lately.”

Oh no. Was she calling to warn him about staying away from Kacchan? Midoriya’s chest tightened with anxiety.

“I’m sorry that I acted out of line,” he apologized first. “I–”

“Oh no, I’m not calling to talk about the little misunderstanding you and Katsuki had. I understand that issue has been resolved by your teacher already. This is about Xanxus.” Her tone turned serious, colder even. “Please, I know that you were there when your class ran into Xanxus. I’d like to know what you think of him and honest answers only. I’m quite concerned about Katsuki and since he is unwilling to speak in depth and he might be biased towards the man, I wanted to hear what you think. You’ve known him for a long time too after all.”

She sounded genuinely worried. Midoriya wasn’t going to lie to the woman who had been like a second mother to him when he was little either so he told her everything. From the way Xanxus slammed his coworker’s heads to his constant use of foul language against Katsuki. He talked about what he looked like and how he expected the whole world to treat him as if he was the emperor.

By the end of it, he felt a little bad because his eagerness in spilling the beans was promoted by his desire to split Xanxus and Katsuki up. But it wasn’t like he lied or exaggerated anything either.

Aunty Mitsuki sighed. “As I expected then.”

There were some muffled noises from her end before she cleared her throat. “We are having a meeting with Xanxus and Katsuki this Saturday. It will be set in the afternoon and we will make it clear that this relationship is going to fly. Would you like to come for dinner on Sunday, Izuku-kun? I’ll make your favorite Katsudon.”

Okay, that was a bit weird. Midoriya felt an inappropriate joy sparked when he heard the Bakugous were against Katsuki’s relationship. See! It wasn’t just him who had questions about it. Yet, he found the woman’s request a little out of place too. “...Um, why?”

“I heard about your crush from your mom,” she explained. “I think you and our Katsuki would make a wonderful couple. Now, I’m not saying you have to accept it and it’s still ultimately Katsuki’s choice but nobody said we can’t help give you a chance.”

Midoriya's jaw dropped. She…they wanted to help him get together with Kacchan? That was like a dream come true. It felt like there was a stream of renewed confidence flowing into his veins about how not all hope was lost. He always knew the Bakugous would be such pleasant in-laws and he knew this wasn't permission to be weird or trying to make another love confession. But maybe he could just use it to apologize to Kacchan about how he had behaved.

Yes, just an apology and nothing more.

He'd make sure he did everything with honor this time.

Chapter End Notes

I think the Bakugous are a bit better at hiding their neglect/abuse since they deal with keeping their image a lot. Going for a pretty weird angle at characterization for the Bakugous here (don't really want to do the simple big bad abusive parents route) so let me know what you think if you feel like it.

Thank you, until next time (or when I get to replying to the comments, I read them but haven't found time to sit down and reply yet) :)

Chapter 33: Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

I don't want really long chapters so keeping the word count below 10k. Same warning as last chapter apply here I guess?

WARNING: Bad parenting and complete ignorance

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Do you want to explain yourself?” Masaru’s voice was soft as he sat their son down on the sofa of their house. They were allowed to take their son home on Friday night. “Katsuki, what were you thinking?”

They weren’t against teen romance but it should be just that, *teen* romance. There shouldn’t be any adults involved in that equation.

Mitsuki sat down next to her husband and watched as her son wore an unreadable expression. He was a doll when he was quiet, where the silence washed away the angry lines and allowed the calmness to really shine through. However, he also felt lifeless in those moments.

“He’s not thinking,” Mitsuki snapped in irritation.

“Mitsuki, not now.”

Katsuki glared at them. “I like guys. I found one who likes me back. We are together. That’s the whole story. They are blowing things out of proportion because he’s rough around the edges. You know I do the same and fuck, you hit me yourself, Hag.”

“That is different!”

Katsuki’s gaze flickered between the two of them. “I thought you said you wanted to give Xanxus a chance.”

“He’s a grown man dating a teenager. We can give him a pass if he is 18 but he’s 24. You’re *sixteen*,” stressed Masaru. “No decent adult would do such a thing. If he really liked you, he should be waiting. And what about Izuku?”

“What does Deku have anything to do with this?”

“Katsuki, how many times do we have to tell you to not call Izuku

with that name?" When he was a kid, it was excusable but certainly not when he was fully capable of pronouncing the other boy's name now. "We know you two have drifted apart but you attacked him with a knife because of Xanxus? That's way over the line."

His eyes went wide at the mention of that. "What crap are you talking about? He tried to–"

"He made a love confession. You could have turned him down in a nicer way."

"He tried to put his lips on me! How the fuck was I supposed to turn him down in a *nice way*?"

"I taught you how." Mitsuki had made sure he knew how to deal with situations like this since he used to model for them. There were bridges that couldn't be burned in the short run and although she hated it too, sometimes diffusing the situation must take priority. "Izuku has always been there for you and he may have gotten too overwhelmed but you shouldn't be trying to stab him."

A slap or two? Yes, they could understand it and how justified those would be but a knife? Dear god, she knew her son had a temper but this was completely psychotic. This was Izuku they were talking about. Inko already apologized and Mitsuki felt that this situation added a weird tension to their friendship, which was absurd. She had been friends with Inko since highschool and this just wouldn't do.

Also, instead of some strange man, she would much rather see Katsuki be with a familiar face, the boy she watched growing up since he was just a baby.

"I don't need him," Katsuki spat. "I don't like him, not that way and not even in general after the shit he pulled. I don't care if it was the heat of the moment or whatever else there was. I told him no and he didn't listen."

"Building a relationship requires communication from both ends and there are bound to be little scuffles."

"What relationship?" Katsuki nearly jumped up from the sofa. Anger lit up behind his eyes and sparks flew from his palms. "I already told you I don't like him. I have a fucking boyfriend!"

"No, that's not a boyfriend. That's a groomer and you are too blind to see that it isn't healthy. We've already contacted a therapist for you

and you'll start next week," Mitsuki said. "That is not a punishment, Katsuki. We're trying to help you."

"You don't like my choice in boyfriends so you're sending me to therapy? Do you realize how ridiculous that sounds?"

"It's not just about your relationship choices. We should have done this sooner, back when the sludge villain situation happened," Masaru sighed. "You had a traumatic experience with a villain while the heroes watched and did nothing. Nobody walks away from that with just a shrug but you did. At first we thought you just needed space to process this alone first but it is becoming clear that you need more help."

"Don't you see the problem, Katsuki? You don't know fear, you can't form bonds with people around you, you treat others like trash, you push people's kindness away and seek out abuse as love to intentionally sabotage yourself," Mitsuki added, trying to keep her voice steady. "Baby, I'm not saying you are insane but you're sick in the heart. You're hurting yourself and those who care about you. This can't go on."

Katsuki's expression darkened. "*That* is your conclusion from all this?"

"We've seen how people always raised you onto a high pedestal. Their words got to your head and your ego inflated. We tried our best to keep you grounded but you've proven time and time again that our efforts were not enough." Admitting that out loud actually hurts. They failed their kid.

"I don't think I am the best, I'm far from it."

"You certainly don't act that way."

He fell back into silence again. Mitsuki hated his silence. At least when he was yelling he was still communicating some of his thoughts to them. When he was quiet, Mitsuki simply felt that he was slipping further and further away.

"You don't care about anyone in your life. Inko had been nothing but gentle and kind with you and you went on to be mean to her son. We know how you ignored Izuku and allowed the other kids to bully him. You have the power to stop them yet you just watched. We gave you the best we can in everything and you barely talk to us at all. Can you name one friend from middle school who wouldn't abandon you when you need it? You can't. You mix yourself with a bad crowd and then

cry victim. We can't save you if you aren't willing to save yourself."

"Is that all?" Katsuki suddenly asked. A small spark of explosion went off inside his palm and he bit his bottom lip.

"No, there is one more person you need to talk to." Masaru got up and went over to the next room with the door shut. Inko walked out, Mitsuki had told her what they planned to talk to Katsuki about beforehand and she also had a few things she wanted to pitch in.

The first was an apology.

"Izuku shouldn't have done that to you," Inko said in her regular soft voice. "He should have respected your personal space. I have already scolded him for it and he will not do that again."

"He better not," Katsuki mumbled.

"However, that is two separate things from the way you've been treating Izuku. I am mad at you and your inaction but I am more mad at myself for not seeing things as they were sooner." Inko's voice grew stronger and her eyes colder. "I understand some feelings cannot be reciprocated and you do not have to see him as a friend but you acting like he's beneath you all the time is not right. That shouldn't be happening whether he was quirkless or not."

"What do you want from me then?"

"I'd like you to hear an apology from him. He has wronged you but you have also hurt him in the past. I'd also like you to get a deeper understanding of what quirklessness really means, whether that is through volunteering or even just researching on the internet about their stories. The discrimination and hardships they have to struggle through is not a joke. Maybe then you will be able to treat him like how a decent human being should. I know you are capable of it since your…boyfriend is also quirkless."

Izuku didn't get enough positive social interactions to learn how to deal with things properly yet. He was a teenager and teen boys were not rational creatures. Like Inko, Mitsuki and Masaru believed he could learn and so could their Katsuki to learn empathy and compassion.

"Xanxus would never use his quirklessness as an excuse," Katsuki pointed out venomously.

"It may sound like an excuse to you but you have been very lucky, Katsuki. Izuku is not privileged like you and his sufferings shaped him in ways that we cannot begin to comprehend. I am not saying you have to return his feelings, only that you should handle it with more care. For all he had to went through, please give him a chance to amend. How can he learn if all everyone do is beat him down?"

"I am not his learning experience!" Smoke and the sound of explosions filled the room. Katsuki got up and raced up the stairs, locking himself in his room.

“Katsuki!”

Masaru apologized to Inko while Mitsuki banged on his door. Such a childish act. He always deflected and ran away when the conversations got real. Mitsuki screamed at him through the door but he must have jammed it from the inside because even with a master key, she couldn't get it open.

Really, he was such an embarrassment. Where was the issue in hearing an apology? Mitsuki also didn't understand where the resentment towards Izuku came from. He was a sweet boy, kind and polite with wonderful grades. She heard he was doing well in UA too. Considering Katsuki's personality, it was a miracle someone as nice as Izuku loved him and was willing to put up with all his bitchy demands.

There was a car waiting for them outside the next morning.

Mitsuki narrowed her eyes suspiciously at the black car parked out front. It wasn’t anything flashy or unique, just a simple car that would blend right into the sea of vehicles out in the streets. However, she recognized the silver logo. It was a small manufacturer based in Germany but they only took custom orders from a list of highly influential clients. The European old money kind.

It certainly wasn’t common to see this brand of cars in Japan.

“What is the meaning of this?” she demanded. Xanxus should be meeting them here.

“You said you would meet Xanxus,” Katsuki huffed. He had been defensive about his relationship ever since it was revealed that he was dating a questionable character. To Mitsuki, it was just a sign of her son being too brainwashed and drunk on love. He was a child, children were inexperienced and short sighted that they never knew

what was the best for them. “So get in, we’re meeting him.”

“Watch your tone, brat.” Mitsuki slapped him on the back of his head but he caught her wrist.

“Don’t hit me,” he hissed before letting go and stomping over to the car.

A man with long silvery white hair was waiting for him. He was young, in his early twenties probably, with sharp eyes the same shade of gray as a brewing storm. Dressed in a dark suit and light gray shirt, it wasn’t the latest in the season but Mitsuki recognized the craftsmanship. Quality over trends, this was a man with taste. He had the height for a model and a face for one too. However, as Mitsuki met his eyes, she felt the hair on the back of her neck stand up as a shiver traveled down her spine.

Too sharp and too cold. Mitsuki really didn’t like how his demeanor reminded her of how she sometimes saw Katsuki as, it was the same kind of indifference as if they viewed others as ants.

The entire drive was silent.

Her son had given them the basic rundown of who his boyfriend was. Xanxus was the fourth son of a wealthy family in Sicily. Originally he had three older brothers, who passed away because of tragic accidents. His father was old, with a deceased wife, but still competent enough to stay in command of the family business. Xanxus was just in charge of one of the branches. Everything seemed both specific enough that it wasn’t suspicious but also too vague that she didn’t feel like she knew anything even after the lengthy conversation.

The di Cielo family.

Mitsuki wasn’t sure where she had heard about them before but she wasn’t about to dismiss them as simpletons. Katsuki said they were based in Sicily, which in itself was a giant red flag. She had been to Europe enough times to know that crime was still rooted deep there, especially in the heart of Italy, where the mafias were still thriving in their origins.

To make it big out there, *connections* were a must and not just forming good bonds with the local law enforcement. Even if they just wanted to be left alone, most businesses had to side with some kind of organized criminal syndicate to survive.

They were taken to a five star hotel in Namimori.

It was a nice place but nothing that could faze Mitsuki or her husband. They weren't underdressed for the occasion either. Mitsuki always made sure she was dressed well. She was in a dark blue business dress and decorated herself with a bit of silver with a set of matching diamond earrings and necklace. Masaru was dressed in a suit that was tailored to fit his form and the same shade of blue as Mitsuki's dress.

He had tried to make some small talk with Squalo, the silver haired driver, but didn't get anywhere. Somehow, Mitsuki felt that Squalo harbored a grudge against them, which she was sure Katsuki had something to do with.

Speaking of Katsuki, her son was unnaturally quiet. Mitsuki had confiscated his phone, which he reluctantly handed over. Instead of panicking or yelling at her about all the reasons why he was in love, he simply looked as if he was expecting this day to happen. He told her that even if they didn't like Xanxus, he wasn't going to break up with him. Katsuki knew they didn't want to make a big fuss out of this and if they went to court, rape itself was hard to prove with too much negative press already. Oftentimes, it was a he said she said situation. Not to mention, the court needed Katsuki's testimony *against* Xanxus to show there had been indecent intimate acts occurring. Without his compliance, there was no case.

There were no lewd text messages or even anything close to romantic on Katsuki's chat logs with Xanxus. Most of it were dates and time, probably when Xanxus was in Japan, and occasionally a few curse words about annoying school work or good nights. She suspected that Katsuki was hiding a second phone somewhere but it wasn't like she could storm into his dorm and ransack through his room.

She ended his monthly allowance. They didn't have enough time to dish out other kinds of punishment that could be proven effective yet but Mitsuki was finding Katsuki's stubbornness frustrating. She tried explaining to him about the dangers of predatory adults and how men lie to get into people's pants.

Katsuki was having none of it. He also stopped talking to her before Squalo's car arrived this morning.

As all of them got into the elevator, Mitsuki glanced at her son. He was dressed in a white shirt and light orange vest with black lining the side to highlight his narrow waist. Mitsuki wouldn't say he wasn't

dressed up to standards. In fact, it was the first time she had seen him change out of his baggy sweats without kicking up a fuss.

Squalo led them up to the penthouse suite and directly into the office connected to the main living space. It was decorated in the same luxurious European style as the rest of the hotel with its carved ceilings and white Roman pillars. The table was made of ebony wood and the thick red curtains lined with gold blocked out the sun.

The chandelier light was on, so the room wasn't shrouded in complete darkness but unlike the sunny day outside, it was chilly here.

Upon first glance, Mitsuki couldn't help but feel the dread running through her veins like a shot of ice cold water during a winter storm. Xanxus was every bit of the rumor that Mitsuki had heard up to now. Since he was sitting down at the head of the long table, Mitsuki couldn't judge his full height but he certainly wasn't a small man. Broad shoulders and chiseled features, he certainly had that foreign look to him. However, it wasn't the sunny and energetic appearance that a lot of the Western Hollywood male celebrities had. He was handsome in a darker way, marred by scars and instead of beaches and puppies, he was more suited with steel drenched in blood.

Mitsuki felt like a deer caught in the headlight. Xanxus had red eyes too but not the same shade as hers or Katsuki's. There was a wickedness to his red, like a poison that had taken root and the pollution was too deep to be removed. His clothing was made of quality material but he obviously didn't feel any urgency to present himself all sharp and serious. The white dress shirt wasn't buttoned fully and his tie was loose.

He didn't get up to greet them or even address their presence. Instead, he held out an empty whiskey glass. Katsuki walked over and silently grabbed the whiskey bottle, poured half a cup of the golden liquid and then added ice cubes.

Mitsuki frowned mentally at the servitude. She wouldn't say Katsuki had turned submissive, no certainly not. He didn't see himself as lower than Xanxus and there was no resignation of confidence either. He simply didn't appear as aggressive as he sat on one of the arm handles of Xanxus's chair, a position where it was easy to refill the man's glass but also wouldn't block his view.

This was a habit that took time to form.

She didn't like that one bit.

“Mammon,” Xanxus said in a low voice, sounding already bored and wanting to get everything over with. The ice cubes in his whiskey clattered against each other in the glass, almost like the chime of a bell.

The door behind the Bakugous slammed shut, startling them. When Mitsuki turned around, she saw a lean figure in a black cloak. A strand of purple hair and a sharp pale chin could be seen from beneath the hoodie but everything else was concealed tightly under the black fabric.

“Sit please, this meeting will be over soon.” It was near impossible to tell the gender from their voice. Mitsuki sat down with Masaru at the end of the table, the only two other chairs around the table.

A folder was passed over.

“These are quotes for all of the expenses necessary to start a hero agency in both Japan and Italy.” The cloaked figure laid down some printed excel sheets with all the estimated expenses listed out. “There is a fund set up for Katsuki once he reaches eighteen to cover everything he will need to have two fully operational offices up and running within the first year of his pro hero debut. This is separate from the insurance set in place already, effective on the day of his graduation and the stocks that Boss will transfer to Katsuki once he reaches 21, the age of majority without dispute.”

The last sentence was a warning. While most people were considered adults at 18 around the globe, there were still places where 21 was the legal age. It would be a lengthy court battle but not completely impossible for the legal guardians to fight for control over the finances of their child.

“Where are you getting with this?” They were working an angle, and Mitsuki had been in the business for too long to not recognize the signs.

“This is just an outline of what your son will get out of this relationship.” Pausing, they tapped a finger on the paperwork before adding, “The materialistic portion of it at least. Please don’t interrupt me again until I am finished.”

There was ice lining their words even if their tone was dead.

“As I was saying, he will have full support in running his hero agency in both countries, should he choose to have two offices opened at the

same time. There will not be a wedding, there will not be any public reveal of their relationship, and you two are not obligated to participate in any of the family functions on Boss's side of the family. You do not have to worry about if a reveal of having a homosexual son will affect your business or not."

Mitsuki had to grip her purse tight under the table to ensure that her ears hadn't betrayed her. Were they serious? This had to be a joke or else it was simply insulting.

"I'm sorry but I have to interrupt," Masaru spoke up, holding out hand to stop Mammon. "This is not right. All of this is sounding very much…not like a normal dating relationship. Are you suggesting that our son is only good enough to be, and excuse my crude language, a *side piece?* In exchange for money?"

There was no other way to explain all the secrecy and amount of money the man was willing to invest into Katsuki, a Japanese hero student, when Xanxus himself was an Italian. Normal people do not go across the globe and simply toss hundreds if not millions at a random kid off the road for no good reason at all. Suddenly all the loveless text messages made sense. Katsuki was a stable hook up, a companion on business trips and yes, Mitsuki supposed that counted as "dating" if the standards were low.

Mammon wasn't at all puzzled or fazed at the accusation. "Boss is being very generous in making sure Katsuki is well taken care of."

"He's the one dating that Victoire girl," Mitsuki snapped. She knew where she heard about the di Cielo family before now. It was about that teen model people kept comparing to the younger version of her. The guy Victoire was dating was the youngest son of the di Cielo family. Dark hair and tall, the same as Xanxus. "He's two timing Katsuki and her!"

Mitsuki couldn't believe it and anger was flaring up her chest. She supposed Katsuki and Victoire were similar, in the sense that they both had blond hair, crimson eyes, and fair skin. This bastard had a type and he wasn't even a bit bothered by how horrible he was to cheat on two *teenagers* at the same time.

A strangled cough escaped Squalo's throat. Mitsuki was pretty sure he muttered something along the lines of "she's not dumb after all". If she wasn't too busy glaring at Xanxus, Mitsuki might have turned around and gave him an earful.

“That’s it, screw you and your money.” Mitsuki slammed her hand into the table heavily. “Katsuki, come here. We’re leaving. No son of mine is being someone else’s mistress.”

Especially not when the “proper wife” was the young model that Mitsuki distaste.

The blond teen didn’t move.

“Katsuki?” Masaru asked, suddenly more nervous than he should be. “...Did you know about Victoire?”

“Of course I do.”

“Does she know about you?”

“Duh.”

Mitsuki sucked in a sharp breath. “And you knowingly became a homewrecker?”

“I’m not wrecking any homes.” He sounded too serious for this to really be happening. “I can assure you that all parties involved in this relationship have given mutual consent.”

“What kind of trainwreck logic are you on?” Mitsuki absolutely wasn’t having this. She understood there were open relationships out there but that was the thing. It was *out there,* not in her own fucking backyard! “He very well is just playing with the two of you and even if it comes down to it, she’s going to be the one he stays with. She’s the one who can give him an heir.”

It was the same for men like that. They fooled around, kissed different lips but at the end of the day most of them would go back to find a proper wife, marry a girl from a sophisticated family of good status and have a child to continue the bloodline.

Katsuki’s lips twitched as he placed the alcohol down and walked towards Mitsuki and Masaru.

“Isn’t that exactly what you taught me, Mom?” He had a smile on his face, one that looked oddly challenging and boastful. Vindictive actually. As if he had something to prove to her. “Grab every opportunity to climb higher whenever I can. You were right about me, I’m exactly the kind of person you think I am.”

He stopped walking when he was just barely out of Mitsuki's reach.

"A narcissist with an attitude filled with belligerence," Katsuki's voice wasn't sharp or even loud. It was low and slow, as if he chose every word after mulling it over in his head at least three times beforehand. "I don't fit in, I don't like people, and I won't ever will. Does knowing you're right make you happy now?"

"That has nothing to do with what we are discussing now," Masaru said. The crease between his eyebrows deepened.

"It has everything to do with this. Stop pretending you care, Dad." The blond teen met his father's worried gaze. "You say everything you do is for me but you never cared about what I want or what I think. Not really. You can give it pretty excuses or wrap it all in a concerned voice but the message is the same thing every single fucking time. *Suck it up.* Prioritize someone else's demands before my feelings and comfort. Instead of letting me defend myself, you tell me to lower my line further so everybody can trash it because that made me the bigger person."

Katsuki shrugged.

"When was the last time you asked me anything besides school? You leave me alone in the house for weeks and months without a call. I know you are busy with work and that you need to work to keep our lifestyle but when we are together, all you ever do is focus on my mistakes and talk shit about how I'm not enough. You complain about how I'm ungrateful and what a burden it is to raise a child, how hard it is on you and all the sacrifices you made. So shouldn't you be happy that I am making it so much easier on you now?"

He pointed at the paper on the table. "I won't need a penny from you."

"That's why you're with him?" Mitsuki practically shrieked as she stood up. Her chair scraped against the carpet and almost toppled over. "Grow up, Katsuki! This is insane! You're throwing your whole life on the line out of childish stubbornness that is both reckless and stupid."

Her son was doing this in protest of their method of raising him. It was infuriating. This wasn't just a teenage rebellious act of wanting to wear all black, blast music at the highest volume or even refusing to do chores around the house. He was doing this because he knew it'd piss them off right in the center of where it hurts the most.

Mitsuki was a model before. She climbed to where she was right now without having to dabble in the darker side of the business but that didn't mean she was unaware of it all. She made it. She clawed and fought her way up to the top even with all the mud being thrown at her and feet stomping her down. No son of hers was going to be the money-grabbing whore that other people claimed she was in her younger days.

She bristled visibly.

"End this foolishness right now. We gave so much into raising you. I put my whole damn career on hold and in jeopardy to give birth to you and this is the thanks we get? That you don't think we love you or give you enough attention? The world doesn't center around you, Katsuki!"

"No, it's about you. Even now it's still about you," he pointed out in the cold fashion that Mitsuki always hated. When he looked at her like that, she knew he didn't see or respect him as his mother. "Who am I hurting by dating Xanxus? Nobody. You just don't like him because his existence does nothing good for *your* image. The people I saved didn't count in your eyes because I didn't do it out of pure selflessness like a good hero in *your* eyes should. It's you. Always you. And Dad just lets you do all your tough love shit because he doesn't really think you're in the wrong. What you do benefits him so he shuts his trap and pretends to be the nice cop."

Masaru got up too. "Katsuki, I didn't–"

"No. Don't even try. That's not going to work this time, Dad. I'm tired of getting yelled at and slapped around just because I am not the kind of son you want."

This wasn't about what kind of kid they wanted. It was about him being a heartless little sociopath who was going off rails and trying to take the easy way up in life.

"That's enough!" Masaru shouted, exploding in anger. He had always been a quiet man and even Mitsuki hadn't seen him get riled up often. "I know you have grievances with us and you butt heads with your mother often but *he* is not a good match for you! He has no respect for us or you, not even the basic decency of politeness!"

"And somehow I still prefer him, what does that say about you?" Katsuki sneered.

Masaru was speechless, it felt as if they were talking to a brick wall. No words were going to avail anything.

Mitsuki was furious. Katsuki hadn't spewed any insults but his words felt more poisonous than the dirtiest insults he had ever thrown at her before. It pained her more than all his angry shouts or aggressive tantrums. Why couldn't he understand where they were coming from? Why couldn't he see all that they had ever done for him? He was sixteen, old enough to know what was good and what was wrong. She taught him everything that could make him a star yet he chose to trash her efforts in every way possible.

The hot flash of anger propelled her to raise a hand against him. Just like every single time they had an argument in the past. He never listened. This child couldn't be reasoned with. The only way to get him to behave was to discipline him.

Except, this time before her palm even made contact with his cheek, there was a loud bang and a dark hole the size of a dime in the ground between her legs. Mitsuki's brain short circuited for a brief second. It took her the next few seconds to put two and two together to recognize that it was a gunshot and there was a bullet that narrowly missed her.

She screamed in horror as her husband scrambled to pull her back.

"Lay a finger on the kid and you're not walking out of here." Xanxus lifted his eyes to look at them. A gun was in his hand and there was smoke coming from its barrel. "This is a waste of my time."

He threw the empty whiskey glass at Katsuki, who dodged it without even flinching. The glass shattered upon making impact with the ground and Mitsuki had no idea why her son would rather be treated so poorly by a man than to come to his senses.

"Normally people like you wouldn't even be able to get an audience with Boss." Mammon packed up the paper and stepped to the side. They sounded a bit annoyed too.

Mitsuki could care less about the displeased grumbles right now. She knew other countries allowed firearm permits for civilians but she had no idea how Xanxus could still carry a gun in Japan. *Villains.* The thought popped into her head and fear grabbed her heart. He looked like one, talked like one, and he even tried to shoot her!

"Katsuki, get away from him," she ordered through ragged breaths.

Her heart was thumping too fast inside her chest. “I don’t care what else is fucking going on but he’s *not* good news. You come over here in this instance or I’m pulling you from UA.”

“You can’t do that.” Katsuki frowned.

“I can. I pay your tuition and we’re still your legal guardians.”

Her son was quiet for a moment before he sighed. “…I hate it when you’re right, Superbi.”

“Told you we should have just let Mammon brainwash them,” Squalo yawned. “I got the transfer school paperworks so just make them sign it. Get this shitshow over with and we’ll be back in Italy tomorrow.”

“I don’t even get to say goodbye to my classmates?”

“The pro heroes would be a pain in the butt.”

Katsuki was pouting but he turned around. Mitsuki felt her husband’s grasp on her tightened and her own heart plummeted to the pit of her stomach. What did they mean by that? She wanted to run but her feet felt stuck to the ground and…wait, what was she supposed to be doing?

Her thoughts were murky.

Then she heard the sound of the doors opening. There was an old gentleman at the entrance. He was dressed in a fine Italian handmade suit tailored to fit professionally and his shoes were polished to a shine. Although he was holding a gold cane that in itself was a work of art, it didn’t seem like he needed one to support him to walk. With a trimmed mustache and gel up hair, he walked in with four bodyguards in black suits behind him.

“I was afraid it would come down to this,” the old man sighed heavily. “Xanxus, tell your men to stand down.”

“Get the fuck out, shitty old man. This isn’t your problem.”

Mitsuki heard something breaking but her mind couldn’t fully register it. There was some aggressive cursing in Italian if she recalled right but honestly, it was all a haze. Her senses only came back into focus fully when she felt herself being pushed back down into a chair.

Masaru was placed in a chair next to her. There was a giant black

charred section on the long wooden table while the air smelled of smoke.

“Who are you?” Masaru questioned.

“Please, call me Timoteo.” The old man sat down in a new chair that his bodyguard, also an older gentleman who looked fit and had a metallic arm, brought in. “I am Xanxus’s father. As you can see, he is in a…late rebellious phase.”

Mitsuki would have scoffed but her body was too tense to do so. Even speaking was a chore as all of her nerves were pulled tight like the strings of a bow ready to snap. The atmosphere in the room made her want to puke. She could see Xanxus out of the corners of her eyes and somehow his scars expanded to cover most of his face. Veins popped along the back of his hands and he looked way too trigger happy for her to be comfortable. Katsuki had a hand on Xanxus’s, as if he was making sure the man wouldn’t start shooting everybody.

The main problem, however, was still the old man claiming to be Xanxus’s father. He had that gleam in his eyes that told Mitsuki he wasn’t an easy one to fool. Every tiny piece on him was a luxury item, from the gems decorating his cane to the diamond cufflinks, this was a man raised fine and proper in the wealth of old money’s wisdom.

An old fox.

“Forgive me for such late introductions but there never seemed to be a good time to pay you a visit.” He was seated with his back straight and both hands on the head of his cane. His voice was smooth and his Japanese fluent, without an accent too. “I shall be frank with you. Xanxus is my only child, the only son I have left after a series of tragedies. I might have spoiled him a bit much and his relationship with Katsuki had been a surprise to me too.”

That didn’t sound too bad. Mitsuki thought they might be able to reason with him. She suspected that people like him wouldn’t want his son dating improper candidates either. It was a bit infuriating but she was willing to let it slide if it helped bring Katsuki back to his senses.

“I understand where your concerns stemmed from. If the situation was reversed, I am sure I would be worried too. These are proud boys and I doubt they have explained the details, which is why I felt the need to speak with you face to face.”

“I was handling the situation, you old fart.” Xanxus slammed a hand

on the table and the legs on that side gave out, causing the whole thing to crash onto the ground. “We had it under control.”

“In a rather blunt fashion,” Timoteo coughed. “Uprooting Katsuki in the middle of a school year is not the civilized solution, especially considering that he is enrolled in UA’s hero class.”

“Still way better than letting them treat him like they do,” Squalo grumbled. “Boss is already being very civil with them or…”

He didn’t finish that sentence or rather, he didn’t feel the need to.

“Yes, I can see that. Katsuki has been a very positive influence on Xanxus and it brings me great joy to see my son happy.” Smiling gently at Katsuki, Timoteo nodded. Mitsuki wanted to scream at him about how her son wasn’t a fancy toy to please his son but she could only stare at him as if she was a mute. Something was not right with this family. Something about the men in black and the guns, and the way they spoke was just so wrong that it horrified her to even ponder the clues in depth. “I do not wish for Katsuki to suffer any bit either. This conversation is just to clear things up because a cooperation based on understanding is always better than a forced one based on mixed signals. From my experience, it would prevent plenty of *irrational* behaviors.”

He turned back to face Masaru and Mitsuki.

“Due to an unfortunate turn of events, Xanxus was in a coma for eight years. Although he had been a mature boy before the accident, it is unreasonable to say that his mental age reflected his time on this earth. Now, I understand this might not change your views of him but as a parent myself, I do not think we should get involved with young love. This is a consensual relationship and my son had taken great measures to ensure Katsuki would be thoroughly taken care of, no matter what type of life he chose to live. Should Katsuki wish to end things on his term, everything that has been promised shall still be his to take with him.”

His bodyguard, a younger one with a goatee, handed Mitsuki a folder. Inside, there were no bloody pictures or contracts to sign. Just a list and some pictures.

A list of all of their business partners and pictures of their offices with a schedule of their upcoming fashion shows they had announced through the internet. All public information.

Cold sweat rolled down Mitsuki's back.

The third bodyguard was a large brown man with tattoos on his head. In his hands carried a silver tray that had a red cushion with gold trims. On top of which sat a vintage phone, the kind where people had to spin the number wheel to dial and the handle was connected to the phone by a coil of wires. It looked Victorian, with a wooden base and gold carvings.

"I must admit that I am old and I am not one to keep up with the youths these days. I do, however, have a few old friends whom I share stories over good wine with. In fact, I am due for phone call to wish Mrs. Adrienna Gabor happy birthday. Lovely woman, brilliant in all her artistic tastes and I was just at her granddaughter's baptism last month."

She was the biggest sponsor for Mitsuki and Masaru's largest project of the year, a show in Milan where their brand of clothing was going to be included.

Realization settled in and Timoteo must have noticed because he smiled.

"Let the children be, please."

There was no gun pointed at her face or even any explicit verbal threats yet Mitsuki could only nod in agreement despite every cell in her body screaming at her not to.

"I am glad we were able to reach an understanding without further complications." Timoteo got up and walked over to Katsuki. He held the teen's hand and patted it lightly. "Thank you for putting up with Xanxus, my dear. You are a most wonderful addition to the family's next generation. Please tell Tsunayoshi that you are alright after this too, the boy has been quite worried for you and Xanxus. I wish you good luck with your studies but now, I'm afraid I still have some duties to attend to and must run. I trust you and Xanxus can take care of the rest without any more disturbances?"

Katsuki looked at him for a long moment before casting his gaze down.

"Si. Chi si volta, e chi si gira, sempre a casa va finire. Lui è casa mia."

Mitsuki wasn't fluent in Italian but she caught the word "casa mia", which meant *my home* in that sentence.

Timoteo's smile grew wider, the wrinkles on his face seemed to be tainted with his joy. "Xanxus, you treat this boy nicely now. I will not tolerate any maltreatment of such a delightful darling."

Xanxus turned head away with a *tsk* of his tongue.

Meanwhile, all Mitsuki felt was how strong the blizzard was raging inside her chest.

Chapter End Notes

"Si. Chi si volta, e chi si gira, sempre a casa va finire. Lui è casa mia."

This is translated to "Yes. No matter where you go or turn, you will always end up at home. He is my home."

Hopefully I got the Italian correct XD Please correct me if I'm wrong.

A few more things:

1. Not sure how many people get the implication but Timoteo wants Katsuki to stay in Japan so he could protect/help out Tsuna and the 10th generation if something was to happen. Katsuki is in his first year in UA while Tsuna and the rest are middle schoolers. By the time Katsuki graduated from UA, Tsuna group would be high schoolers and they would be competent enough to start losing more training wheels. Timoteo doesn't say it out right but the information can be pieced together in his talk with Katsuki. He mentions Tsuna and "next generation", instead of using Varia. Does not address the issue of transferring schools but wishes Katsuki good luck in his studies "without any more disturbances". -> To which Katsuki replies the above to state his loyalty to the **familigia** and how he understands what Timoteo wants him to do but also empathize that his loyalty is with Xanxus, not Tsuna.

Timoteo is happy that his son found a partner who doesn't just make him happy but is also a powerful addition to Vongola who is smart enough to read all the cues and react properly. Xanxus doesn't find this insulting because Vongola always comes first. He can kill/maim Tsuna himself but NOBODY ELSE FROM THE OUTSIDE gets to do that. When faced with external threat, Vongola has to be united against that, no matter what kind of internal strife is going on. They already lost 3 heirs, losing another is a slap on their dignity and a sign of Vongola losing

power/becoming a laughing stock, which Xanxus cannot tolerate.

2. Xanxus is not raging at the Bakugous because a) he really doesn't think they are worth his time b) killing them himself is a waste of bullets and lowering his standards (this is a man who only kills the worst of the worst in the mafia world or actually challenging opponents c) Katsuki doesn't want his parents' blood on the carpet.

Mafia politics and logic. I tried. Hopefully this all makes sense ٩(๑•̀□•́๑)۶✧

Chapter 34: Extra

Chapter Notes

Warning: MPREG mentioned

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sawada Tsunayoshi was twenty years old and he believed he had every right under the sun to drink until he blacked out.

He wasn't an alcoholic and he certainly didn't consume liquor as heavily as most of the Italian men around him. In fact, on most days he preferred to not touch a drop of that bitter stuff.

Today wasn't one of those days.

His first crush was officially dead as of half an hour ago. Not literally of course, figuratively speaking only. Tsuna had been in love with a girl in his middle school and this crush didn't fade even after they all graduated and Tsuna moved to Italy. Although her older brother, Sasagawa Ryohei became Vongola Decimo's sun guardian, Sasagawa Kyoko was still just a civilian. Neither Ryohei nor Tsuna thought it was right to drag the girl into the dark side of the world. Tsuna had liked her for so long but as he aged and started shouldering more responsibilities within Vongola, his love for her had to take a backseat. It was hard to consider starting a family or dating in general when he was buried under paperwork or fighting in unsavory situations.

He had been naive. The more he was immersed in the mafia world, the more he realized that Kyoko shouldn't have anything to do with this life. She didn't deserve a life of danger and blood, to be waiting for a husband whom she'd never know if he was going to come back home in one piece every night. She had no formal training in any martial arts and she was no sports prodigy. Kyoko grew up in Japan, in a time where All Might's brightness overpowered any evil threats. The girl belonged to a society of peace where she should be thinking about what to have for dinner and not if she would be killed in a ball.

Besides, Kyoko was a nice person. She was kind and gentle, with the patience of a saint. It would be selfish of Tsuna to court her and bring her into a world where there were too many daggers hidden behind friendly smiles. Mafia wives, even girlfriends for the matter, they were

not safe and they had their own wars to fight. Perhaps not all with a sword or guns but their words certainly hurt no less. They were targets too. The first to be made an example of when rivalries got heated or turned into collateral damages as the bullets do not care for how beautiful one was.

Tsuna had no idea how Katsuki did this. Let alone juggle all these mafia high society politics with his hero work. Reborn was right when he said Xanxus was a lucky bastard to find someone so perfect for the role, whose companionship he also enjoyed.

It would be cruel for Tsuna to demand the person he loved to have to unroot everything she was familiar with and toss the life she had built so far to put up with all this. That was not love. That was just pure selfishness.

If he loved her, he needed to let her go.

But that didn't mean it didn't hurt when he did so.

Tsuna had no intent to get drunk with his guardians. That would be a disaster (*drunk* Hibari was a catastrophe that Tsuna forbade from ever showing up in the history of mankind again) and he was pretty sure Reborn would come shooting at him or manage to turn it into another teaching opportunity.

No. Tsuna was not having that. He shall not drink with his dad either. Iemitsu hadn't been much of a father to him at all. Of course he had father problems. Iemitsu was lucky that Tsuna's mom loved him so much.

So that left him with one final option.

"Cheers," Tsuna toasted, raising a whole bottle of vodka at Xanxus's direction. The Varia boss was seated comfortably in the sofa across from Tsuna, kicking his feet up onto the coffee table with one arm lazily draped over the back of the sofa. With the years that passed, Xanxus was not actively plotting Tsuna's death, at least, not so overtly anymore.

Tsuna wouldn't say he wasn't scared of Xanxus any longer but he had figured out a few ways of how to deal with the head of Varia. It had been a vital lesson that Reborn made him discover since Varia, although filled with lunatics, was Vongola's band of strongest elites. They were much more seasoned than the young tenth generation and crucial for the family.

Xanxus made a damn awful subordinate but he was a tolerable drinking buddy, on his good days of course. He also had the best alcohol collection that Tsuna knew of.

The liquor burned as it slid down Tsuna's throat but he needed it. He didn't drain the whole thing in one go, deciding to pace himself out. Xanxus had a wine glass in hand but he could drink a whole lot more so Tsuna wasn't going to compete with him. That wasn't the purpose of why he was drinking.

Alcohol burned away Kyoko's lovely smiles. She was a sensitive and observant girl and while Tsuna never got to the part where he asked her out officially, there was something budding between them. She knew it wasn't meant to be and he wished her the best. They were still friends. Just friends.

It was for the best.

"You look like death." The door to Xanxus's office opened and Katsuki came in with a tray of appetizers to go with the alcohol. He was in a black suit but without the jacket and the sleeves of his maroon shirt were rolled up to his elbows.

It wasn't healthy to consume alcohol on empty stomachs. The pro hero might appear aggressive but he was always so thoughtful and caring in the details. Tsuna appreciated it greatly.

"Katsuki," Tsuna greeted. His speech hadn't started slurring yet, which wasn't a good sign considering his goal was to get wasted. "Always lovely to see you. No dresses this time?"

Usually when he came over, it was Victoire he'd meet. The rumors flying around for Xanxus's love life will never cease to be not funny. Or annoying. Tsuna had no idea how wild people's imagination could run but for the devil's sake, it was *wild.* There were talks of Victoire seducing half of Vongola's current high command (including affairs with Tsuna or his guardians), Victoire and the pro hero Ground Zero, Xanxus being under some sort of love potion voodoo, and love pentagons of all kinds.

It would take a giant wall and a lot of red strings with color coded tapes to show every single pairing that Tsuna had unluckily overheard. It was both entertaining and frightening, especially the few times where he got a pissed Xanxus using him as target practice.

"I can change into a dress and do this again." Katsuki pointed to the

food.

“Please, I’m here to drink my broken heart away, not to commit suicide via Xanxus.” Tsuna took another large gulp of his vodka. “You look wonderful in everything.”

That last line was added because he didn’t want to commit suicide via Katsuki either.

Katsuki was satisfied with the complement. He sauntered over to Xanxus, who was pretty mellowed out. A part of Tsuna told him that the older man was enjoying Tsuna’s misery. Katsuki dropped himself next to Xanxus and pressed himself against the man’s side, resting his head on Xanxus’s shoulder.

“Xanxus,” Katsuki purred into his lover’s ear. His lips ghosted over Xanxus’s before making contact at the edge of the man’s mouth. “Have something to eat before you keep drinking.”

Xanxus chuckled but he didn’t shove Katsuki away as the blond fed him a piece of apple. Katsuki moved himself so that he was fully seated in Xanxus’s lap.

“I’m still here, you know? Also, normally this is the part where you people listen to me rant about my problems.” Assholes. Both of them. They rubbed salt into Tsuna’s wound and he was pretty sure half of all this passion between the two was to make him uncomfortable. Sick bastards really. Do they really have to rub it in when they knew Tsuna just got his heart broken?

Katsuki shared a kiss tainted with the scent of white wine with his lover while Xanxus moved his hand down to Katsuki’s waist.

The answer was yes. Yes, they did. And Tsuna really needed better drinking buddies. He wasn’t asking for much, just people who wouldn’t start making out right in front of him as if he was part of the room decoration.

Tsuna chugged about a third of his bottle.

“Stupid trash, you’re the one that’s interrupting. This is my castle.”

Tsuna was moved. He was now trash with an adjective. That was an upgrade. But honestly, he would much rather give the Varia boss a middle finger instead. Technically yes, while Varia was part of Vongola, the castle was Xanxus’s property legally speaking. Vongola

Ninth had his private fortune that was not tied with Vongola's budgets and since he wanted to compensate the son he had wronged, he already gave Xanxus a lot of it to avoid the inheritance tax issues.

Nobody really knew how much the wealth was but Tsuna knew it was big. He would be kidding himself if he said he wasn't jealous of it sometimes especially when he saw the damage bills his guardians caused on a monthly basis.

"At the very least, please don't start stripping like last time."

He knew they'd never actually go at it right in front of him. There was no way in hell that Xanxus would let anybody see his lover in such intensely intimate moments. But that didn't mean they weren't going to act very provocatively.

Well, maybe Tsuna should be glad that he was luckier than Mukuro, who actually walked in on the two before. Tsuna heard from Chrome that Mukuro got a black eye from Katsuki throwing a heel at him.

There were no heels in the room to be used as murder weapons right now. Tsuna was safe.

Katsuki laughed. He hasn't really changed much since highschool. Still the same blond hair and fierce red eyes. His temper was still a bomb and the only difference was that he grew a bit taller while his muscles filled out some more. "Don't worry, we're taking things easy lately."

"Do I want to know?" Tsuna didn't think it had anything to do with issues in the bedroom. Katsuki looked healthy and Xanxus…well, Xanxus let his hair grow out a bit and he no longer wore as many beads or feathers in his hair. He even hit a small growth spurt since his body had recovered from being frozen for too long. If it weren't for the eight years in the ice, Tsuna was sure this would be the Xanxus he had to deal with ten years ago, which in itself was a terrifying thought. If Tsuna had to say, Xanxus's body was still in his twenties even if he was thirty something on paper.

"Want to tell him?" Xanxus was smiling. It was all toothy and evil and vicious but it was still a smile. Okay, Xanxus was either actually very intoxicated already or that Tsuna wasn't going to see the light of day tomorrow.

Katsuki tossed a pregnancy test at Tsuna. It landed on the table in front of him and the current Vongola Decimo suddenly found himself staring at two little lines.

“I’m pregnant.” Katsuki beamed with a blush on his cheeks.

Suddenly, forget about Kyoko and all the other troubles. All those problems could wait. The vodka in Tsuna’s hand tasted plainer than water and he needed something stronger. Something a lot stronger *right now.*

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to play with 10 years later Tsuna and this came out. Decimo Tsuna is on the route to become Tuna servant to Varia's little princess (˘ ³˘)♥

Also, Xanxus is not looking forward to having a kid but he does enjoy the combo of Tsuna + misery.

Check out this fic for Xanxus x Katsuki too please♡ the idea is hilarious!

https://archiveofourown.org/works/41208405/chapters/103307535

Chapter 35: Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Sunday rolled around, Midoriya got ready to meet with the Bakugous. He made sure he was cleaned up well and dressed casual enough to not look like a clown but also not too much like a slob. He picked stuff that he was comfortable with and didn't try to imitate a style that wasn't his usual taste.

He wasn't going to make the same mistake again. Xanxus had his strengths and Midoriya was finally realizing that he had his too. He was the one who knew Kacchan for longer and the one who was physically closer since Xanxus mainly worked in Italy. It was him who got to see Kacchan day and night of the week and he had the support of both of their parents. Kacchan was just confused and fooling around, he would get it eventually. He would come to understand that men like Xanxus were easy come and easy go while Midoriya had been waiting for him all this time.

But before all that, Midoriya needed to make sure they were on the right path with easing the tension between them with a proper apology.

The Bakugous' home was a spacious place where everything was neatly arranged, just like how Midoriya remembered it to be when he was little. Some items were moved around but overall it still felt the same. Aunty Mitsuki made his favorite katsudon but no amount of good food could hide the shadows gathering under her eyes. Her smile was too pale too, as if she had caked her face with powder and forcefully painted a smile on her lips. Uncle Masaru didn't look too good either.

Midoriya saw the reason.

A black car came by and dropped Katsuki off in front of his house. He was dressed too formally, nothing like the baggy clothing he liked before. Kacchan didn't look too disgruntled though.

Midoriya saw a tuf of familiar feathers through the crack in the black-tinted window before it rolled up completely.

Xanxus.

This was odd. He thought the Bakugous were going to intervene with that questionable relationship. However, Midoriya didn't think it would be a really great start to this visit by bringing such a question up. Besides, he didn't want to let the thought of Xanxus ruin today. He didn't need his imagination running wild about all the possible things Xanxus and Kacchan did or the little secrets and whatever memory they have between them.

Maybe it was because his mother was also here but Kacchan didn't immediately scorn him. Of course, Kacchan wasn't friendly either but he stayed in his seat until Midoriya finished his apology.

Kactsuki didn't say he accepted the apology but that was alright. They could take things slow. Their parents chatted while the TV was on. Midoriya kept his gaze on his food and occasionally glanced at Katsuki. The blond boy didn't seem interested in small talk and there was a very awkward atmosphere between him and his parents that both Midoriya and his mom picked up.

After they had food, his mom and the Bakugous were having tea in the living room while Midoriya helped Kacchan clean up the dishes.

"You haven't given up yet, have you?" Kacchan suddenly asked.

"...I've had this crush since we were kids, it's a little hard to let go in just a few days." Midoriya wiped the water off a plate and placed it away. "But what I did was stupid and not right, I went about everything wrong and I won't do it again."

"That's funny when you are doing the complete opposite right now. You know I don't want to see you yet you still agreed to show up to my fucking house."

"I was invited."

"By my parents. Not me." The corner of Katsuki's lips curled into a curve filled with disdain. "You are just like them. You claim to do things for me but you never ask me what I think about it beforehand. Even when you do, you just ignore my answer and continue to wreck your way through until you have things your way."

Midoriya stayed silent. He didn't think arguing with Katsuki was the best course of action. They had enough of that on campus already. Also, he didn't think Kacchan was being very fair either. Midoriya never "got his way" when it came to anything related to Kacchan. Katsuki was the one who decided what they played when they were

kids, the one who wouldn't spare a glance at Midoriya's way no matter how hard the latter tried to get his attention.

He remembered calling out after the blond boy only to be ignored and the multiple times where Katsuki preferred to do things alone when they were supposed to work together. Kacchan assumed that he didn't need anybody to win or preferred the more efficient but heartless methods, which was just wrong.

It didn't hurt to smile (and how lovely Katsuki's smiles must be). But that alone wouldn't have Midoriya so worried. Every hero had their style and he didn't expect all of them to be exactly like All Might. The problem with Katsuki was that he swatted kindness away as if it were mosquitoes or flies, trashed over other people's concerns and isolated himself.

Katsuki might think Midoriya was being annoying but he was merely pointing out all the illogical and dangerous choices the blond was making. He cared for Kacchan and he really wished nothing but the best for him. It drove him mad with frustration to see how Kacchan was putting himself in danger's way or being so on guard with everybody deliberately.

"My parents met Xanxus," Katsuki said, pulling Midoriya's thoughts back to reality. "They are alright with him. I'm not going to be with you no matter how hard you try."

That didn't sound right…Midoriya was sure Aunty Mitsuki was very adamant of being against this relationship before. What changed overnight? Did Xanxus deceive them? Midoriya felt that Xanxus must have done something, maybe some kind of threat?

It made Midoriya nervous. Would Kacchan allow his boyfriend to threaten his parents? He wouldn't, would he? He knew Katsuki had some issues with his parents but it wasn't as if they hated each other's guts…or at the very least, Midoriya didn't think Kacchan would allow his parents to be hurt under his watch.

He saw the same uncaring and faint foreignness in Katsuki's eyes when he talked about his parents. The sight of that made Midoriya want to cower back into himself, suppressing the simmering anger that was threatening to sputter out.

Midoriya didn't understand it. Everybody was trying to reach out to him but Kacchan never responded back. Every time one of them thought things might be getting better or even just believing that life

was looking up a bit, Kacchan was always quick to jump in and remind them otherwise with his cold stares.

Nothing was ever enough in his eyes.

Sometimes Midoriya hated that he loved Kacchan and other times he hated that he hated himself for loving Kacchan. Everything was just so complicated when it came to the mystery that was Bakugou Katsuki.

He should give up.

Midoriya shouldn't be loving a boy who only brought him so much heartache and misery but whenever he looked into those crimson eyes, he drowned in the red. He'd lose himself to the endless fire in the blond's eyes, attracted to how lively and fierce he was.

It was so hard to pull away. It was so hard to stop wishing that he might see his reflection in those beautiful eyes and be surrounded by love for once.

Kacchan was done with the dishes and he walked away. He made it to the door of the kitchen before he halted and turned around.

"Stay away from Tsunayoshi too, you're not the same."

Then he walked away.

Just like always.

A little bit later, Katsuki found an excuse to leave the house by volunteering to go down the street and buy some desserts. Midoriya looked at the Bakugous, who sighed heavily when his mom asked them what really happened.

"His…His father is a powerful man," Uncle Masaru said, worry and shame filled in the shadows between his eyebrows. "If we went against him, he would retaliate financially against our company, cut us off from all our sponsors."

"Katsuki is very deep in that bastard's web of lies," Mitsuki added. "There was no reasoning with him."

They fell into silence afterwards. Even UA couldn't dictate business competitions. Unless Xanxus's family did something illegal…but then it wouldn't even have to get to that point because who could really say anything if a sponsor decided to pull out for any reason? It was

their money, endorsements could be pulled so long as they paid the penalties. Midoriya had seen it happen to plenty of celebrities and heroes after a scandal or even just a misspoken word at one interview.

All Midoriya remembered was a viscous kind of sadness and helplessness that flooded the room after that. He remembered leaving the Bakugou's house and just before he stepped out, he saw the pleas in the Bakugous' eyes.

"Help him, please."

The shape of those words were on Aunty Mitsuki's lips but the wind didn't carry her exhausted sound.

2

Inko hadn't known that anger could scorch her heart in such a heat.

She had always known about the horrid things the quirkless community had to face. In this world where everybody had powers of some sort, those without the mutation were thought to be apes, failures of evolution that were going to be left behind.

It was unfair and cruel. When Izuku's quirk didn't present when he was four, she had prayed that he was just a late bloomer and he would eventually be alright, be just like the other kids. Her hope started dying off bit by bit as the days turned into years, when Izuku started coming home with scraped knees and dirt on his shirt, trying to hide the quiet sniffles.

Inko tried to help. She attempted to cheer him up by cooking all his favorite foods and making sure he was comfortable at home. She got him his favorite hero merchs if she could and supported him in everything he wanted to do.

Izuku was the stronger of the two of them though. He hadn't let go of his dream of being a hero and although Inko didn't have the same faith in it, she couldn't bring herself to disagree with his dream. She never stopped him from chasing it either.

Izuku was a sweet boy, always so gentle and caring. He would help out around the house and try to make her laugh if she ever felt down. He had a love for helping people and he was smart, keeping up with his studies diligently.

Yet, it was this same boy who had been tormented and abused on a

daily basis.

The teachers were supposed to protect her baby. It was their job to care yet they only added to the malice and fueled the bullying with their negligence. Inko knew something was fishy when she received Izuku's first middle school report card. The comments on there made her think they must have mixed up someone else's record with her child's. His grades were good but they called him "disruptive and unruly", chided him for actions that Inko knew for sure couldn't have been done by her son.

She was so mad at their bigotry and presumption that some people were inherently lesser than others because they were born different. But Izuku always came home saying that he was fine, that there was nothing to worry about.

Inko was a child once and she knew how sometimes adult intervention just made things worse. The bullying would get nastier or worse, drive her boy into a deeper and more dangerous corner. He refused to talk and the school had a very strong legal edge that was good at making things go away.

She didn't want to force Izuku to do things he wasn't ready for, even if it pained her to watch him attempt to hide the bruises and hurt. Inko tried bringing up her concerns with the school staff but she was quickly dismissed each time. Without proper evidence, she couldn't go to the police either. She also thought about changing schools but between her husband being overseas, financial issues, and all the other things that needed to be considered when uprooting their lives, she never figured out a plan that would work without having their standards of life drop significantly.

Sometimes, the weight of life made her feel hopeless. She could change schools or move them to different places but it seemed like everywhere, the discrimination and stigmas followed. It was the same stories happening all around and eventually, she gave up on searching and dropped into the stages of grief and being angry at herself.

She wasn't proud of it. She failed as a mother, unable to provide her child the basic starting line as everybody else took a toll on her while her worry for Izuku grew. But everyday she still puts on a smile and pretended everything was alright for the sake of her family.

What made her blood boil hotter was how her best friend's son, the child she had watched grown up, was also part of the mess. It wasn't

to say that he bullied Izuku along with the rest of the kids, no, he merely watched.

Somehow that hurt more than any punches or mean words.

He did nothing. He watched with cold eyes as Inko's poor boy got beaten down or called names. He walked around with the attitude that he was at the top of the world while ignoring all the cries for help Izuku wept.

They were children. *Teenagers*. Katsuki must know how his actions influenced others. He had always been the neighborhood boys' unofficial leader and his words were better than any teacher's. If he had told the other kids to leave Izuku alone, they would have listened. While Inko didn't like violence and she certainly didn't expect anybody to get in trouble for Izuku's sake, she thought Katsuki would have at least speak up against the bullying.

Instead, his silence allowed their evil to fester.

It was horrendous. Inko supposed the betrayal was why it angered her the most. She had been kind to him, treated him as a second son even if they had no blood relations and left Izuku in his care but Katsuki did nothing. He didn't reciprocate her kindness or even had the decency to at least meet Izuku's eyes peacefully.

She never expected him to be this heartless.

When Mitsuki confided in her about the troubling signs she observed in Katsuki, Inko hadn't thought too much of it. Children were temperamental creatures and it was obvious that Katsuki took after Mitsuki not just in looks but also with his blunt hotheadedness. Yet, Inko never imagined he could have spiraled so far down.

He had no care for anyone else and his competitiveness was no longer in the friendly or healthy territory, it was a hindrance to his own social abilities and a danger for others.

That was a sociopath in the making.

Inko didn't really want her Izuku to be with a boy who was so… *troubled*. She wanted to believe that Katsuki was a good boy at heart but it was buried under layers of aggression and highly risky choices.

Also, she was biased but she didn't want Izuku to hurt any further. Katsuki didn't return his feelings, which Inko could understand. While

as his mother, Inko saw all the good qualities in her son, such as his compassion and determination, she also knew of his faults. Izuku had always been a peculiar child and sometimes, that steered people away from him.

What freaked her out was how Katsuki had attempted to come after Izuku with a knife after the latter declared his love. There was absolutely no need to get so worked up. Katsuki *knew* what Midoriya was like, he knew her son meant no harm and was just easily swayed away by the moment. There was no threat to his safety and Inko wouldn't have taken any offense if Katsuki had rejected Izuku normally, *decently* with grace and sincerity like normal people would. Could he not have let Izuku down in a gentler fashion?

Instead, he had to be dramatic and extreme about it by almost critically and permanently injuring Izuku. Did Izuku deserve a slap or two for advancing too fast? Yes, he certainly did. But a *knife* to the face? That was just…oh god, Inko couldn't imagine how she would even hold up if the blade had successfully made contact with Izuku's flesh.

How Katsuki always thought the worst in people was beyond her.

But Izuku still loved him.

Inko didn't know what to do with her child.

Being at the Bakugous made her nervous too. She was worried about whether Katsuki would further hurt her son but also wanted Izuku to be happy. Something was odd with Mitsuki and Masaru though, Inko wasn't an unseasoned teen who couldn't read the room. The Bakugous' meeting with Xanxus must have been bad because they looked like ghosts and have not spoken anything about their son's dating preferences.

"Stay away from Tsunayoshi too, you're not the same."

She heard what Katsuki said to Izuku. Judging from Izuku's expression, they didn't have a good chat. Maybe that was for the better, Izuku certainly deserved someone less troublesome. The feeling was confirmed when her friends spoke about the threats Xanxus's father made.

Like father, like son. That family must be nothing good. While Inko didn't wish Katsuki to spiral into a life of domestic abuse, she also didn't want Izuku to get tangled in the mess before his career even

took off.

On their way home, Inko decided to ask Izuku about who Tsunayoshi was. She had heard about Xanxus from the Bakugous already and even if her friends didn't go into the details, Inko could tell the quirkless man was not the type of person any parent would want their children around. Quirkless people were rare in this society but just because they were the minority didn't mean there weren't a few bad seeds in the mix.

Izuku looked a bit down but he still answered her, "He's the kid that Kacchan tutors, the one who got kidnapped along with him by the villains. Sawada Tsunayoshi."

"Oh, that boy!" Inko remembered the news about him. Since he was a minor, there wasn't much on him and the media focus had been on UA and Katsuki.

Her son also expressed how the boy was friends with Katsuki despite having a relatively non-combative or flashy quirk. The more she heard about the other boy, Inko started getting suspicious. If Katsuki could consider a boy with a weaker quirk as a friend and pick a quirkless lover, how come he could still be so vicious towards Izuku? He must know the pain people like them went through…yet he still couldn't emphasize?

What was the difference between her son and them? Why were they not subjected to the same nasty treatment? Did Inko miss something when she was raising Izuku?

Sawada…Inko felt like she knew that last name from somewhere. It wasn't until she was home and meal planning in her notebooks that she saw the name *Sawada Nana* listed as her classmate in a cooking class. If she remembered correctly, Sawada-san was a petite and slim brown haired woman with warm chocolate eyes. Her husband worked overseas and was rarely home, just like Hisashi.

Maybe Inko could try getting to know Sawada Nana better.

3

His parents were like mice walking on a knife edge.

They knew the threat and Katsuki was certain he would have his peace and quiet until the Milan show was over. Maybe even a bit longer, until his parents could figure out what to do next or just give

up. Normally Katsuki wouldn't like Timoteo messing with the business between Xanxus and him but this time, the old fox did something good.

Part of the talk with his parents ended with Katsuki still needing to attend a therapy session to get an evaluation. Xanxus was the one who agreed to it with a jeer when his parents brought the subject up. Although he had questions, the boss had spoken so Katsuki complied. It wasn't like Xanxus to agree so easily so Katsuki knew his boyfriend definitely had some arrangements made.

His suspicions were confirmed when he walked into the clinic's office and saw the middle aged man sitting in the chair. The doctor in his white coat had dark hair that came below his earlobes and he wasn't fully clean shaven, as evident by the stubbs on his chin.

"Good, you're on time." He ticked off a few boxes on a clipboard he was holding without looking up at Katsuki then passed the pen and paper to him. "Sign your name at the bottom. Have a cup of coffee. Play on your phone. Zone out or do whatever in this room for a full hour, I don't really care."

"You're supposed to be my doctor, Dr. Shamal." Katsuki almost laughed as he sat down across from the man. "We're here to talk about feelings and stuff. Wait, do you even have a psychiatrist license?"

"I do have a license but I don't treat men." Dr. Shamal shrugged without a care in the world. "As much as you look wonderful in a dress in magazines, you are still very much physically male. Thanks for ruining the image of Victoire for me by the way. If you're hurt physically, grab a roll of bandages from the cabinets and treat yourself."

Katsuki had no idea why Tsunayoshi's school medic was here acting as a therapist but he wasn't about to complain. Dr. Shamal or "Trident Shamal" as the mafia world knew him, was both a skilled surgeon and an assassin who engineered mosquitoes to carry special diseases that he used to kill his targets with. Squalo once wanted to recruit him for Varia but the doctor turned down the offer. Most of the time, he was a flighty womanizer who would rather be off chasing a hot booty than do any serious work.

Reborn had managed to get him to train Gokudera and even become Namimori Middle's in-house doctor.

“Xanxus put you up for this?”

Dr. Shamal yawned as he leaned back into his chair. The clinic was a very standard one, filled with white walls and warm beige ceilings along with the standard bookshelves and desk. The only difference was that it tried to make the space more comfortable than an operation room or ER with soft pastel coloured furniture. “It's just a side gig for me. You sit there for an hour. You go home while I get paid twice and your parents are off your back. Everybody’s happy.”

“That doesn’t sound very professional.” Medical professionals were not supposed to act this way. It was unprofessional to be signing off on a patient when they haven’t even performed any examinations.

“I’m a mafia doctor and you are a mafia’s lover. I’m not about to go around listening to your troubles, especially if it concerns Xanxus. You probably don’t want my kind of advice on heroics either.” Knowing too many secrets got people killed. Dr. Shamal might be a pervert and horrible flirt but his survival instincts were very much intact.

“Fair enough.”

Katsuki spent the hour on his phone, mostly just scrolling through social media and watching people hate or love Victoire. Some comments made him laugh too.

Dr. Shamal provided his parents some flowery prose of how he looked forward to working more with Katsuki. It was better to be stuck with the mafia doctor than for his parents to keep switching until they found one who would agree with them that Katsuki was insane so Katsuki didn’t say anything. He knew his parents couldn’t pull him from school right now but they were still his parents. If they said he needed medical intervention, it was still possible for the doctors to haul him away and that’d be a pain in the ass.

Katsuki really hoped it wouldn’t come down to that. Otherwise, there were going to be a few very mysterious and unfortunate tragedies happening.

4

They had a class battle with Class B and Shinsou. Midoriya thought it was very cool to be able to see and experience the other kids’ quirks. It certainly got his mind turning, attempting to come up with all the possible ways to defeat or work with so many different quirks.

He was also happy for Shinsou, who was working hard and getting closer to joining the hero course.

Kacchan still didn't want to talk to him but at least the blond wasn't glaring daggers at him all the time anymore. Kirishima and the others laid off too but Midoriya could feel his classmates' stares whenever he tried to get close to Katsuki.

They were watching him, for both Katsuki and Midoriya's sake.

Kacchan was going to therapy sessions. He would leave the school on Friday night to go to a clinic situated between Musutafu and Namimori then be back on campus Sunday morning. Since Midoriya's mom became friends with Sawada's mom, Midoriya heard Kacchan stayed at the Sawada's often since it was closer.

The Sawadas were very nice people. They had a situation that was very similar to Midoriya's own household with a father that was often away for business and a cheerful mother. Sawada Tsunayoshi was kind of like Midoriya when he was still in middle school in a sense but he was luckier that he had great friends.

Midoriya stopped questioning why Kacchan was alright spending time with Sawada and his friends when the brown haired boy was so similar to Midoriya. Instead, he decided to ask Sawada instead.

"...I really don't want to get involved with this subject," Sawada's voice came over the phone and it sounded like he almost choked on something then it was followed by a very quick *Thanks Enma* before he came back onto the phone. "Also, if Bakugou-kun doesn't want to be friends or date you, that is up to him to decide. I can't help you."

Midoriya was pretty sure he heard something along the lines of "Xanxus would skin me" mumbled under Sawada's breath.

There was some kind of commotion on the other side and Gokudera came on. "If you have issues with Bakugou then ask him directly. Hell, there doesn't even need to be any legit reasons to not like someone so stop bothering Tsuna with your romantic issues. We're busy here."

Then he ended the call.

That was a dead end there.

Midoriya tried to give up. He resorted back to his old method of suppressing all his feelings for Kacchan and kept his focus on school

and hero training.

It was late at night when they heard Katsuki yelling into his phone. He was in a very heated argument with whoever was on the other end. Actually, Midoriya wouldn't call it an argument, it was more of a screaming match. He recognized the other person to be Xanxus.

Kacchan was so mad that he didn't even care that he was in the hallway as he yelled at his boyfriend in Italian. Most of it sounded like profanities and half of it, according to Yayorozu and Aoyama's half-baked French translation afterward, was Kacchan telling Xanxus how he should take it easy with the more dangerous jobs and to take better care of himself. Xanxus, on the other hand, brushed Kacchan off like he was telling a dog to fuck off in very horrible ways. When the call ended, Kirishima went up to Katsuki.

"Hey man, everything okay?" he asked.

The blond boy shoved his phone back into his pocket. The rims of his eyes were a bit red. "Yeah. He's just being a dick who thinks he's invincible. Stupid bastard."

It made Midoriya incredibly jealous how much Kacchan cared for Xanxus. He had never seen the blond be so soft or get so worked up for someone. Xanxus brought out emotions in Katsuki that Midoriya didn't know the blond could feel.

His jealousy simmered.

A part of him told him he should give up but the other half couldn't help but feel they were destined to be together. The boy he had been chasing his whole life, the one so amazing that he shined bright like the sun in Midoriya's world…it was hard to imagine himself with anybody else other than Kacchan.

Todoroki asked if Midoriya and Katsuki wanted to intern with Endeavor. Midoriya was more than happy to go but Katsuki denied it. He said Hearsay was going to take him in again. Interning with Endeavor was a chore but Midoriya got better at controlling blackwhip.

When they came back to school after the interning week was up, they didn't use the front gate. It was closer to get to their dorm from the side gate so Todoroki and Midoriya went in from there. Some of their classmates were already back too and Midoriya could see them walking towards their dorm too.

Katsuki was delivered safely back onto campus by his boyfriend and a chauffeur. They parked just outside the gate, in a quieter corner. Xanxus got out of the car and Katsuki gave him a kiss. It looked like they already made up. The blond teen grabbed his luggage and went inside the school.

Midoriya paused in his step. Todoroki tugged on him, mentioning for him to keep going. However, Midoriya decided that now was his chance to speak with Xanxus.

“I need to talk to you.” Midoriya walked up to the man before he got back into the car. The man was dressed rather simply in a white shirt and dark trousers but his eyes were still dangerous as always.

Xanxus didn’t look like he bothered to stop and chat.

“I like Katsuki,” Midoriya said, a bit louder than he intended. That got Xanxus to stop and turn around.

“I like Katsuki,” he repeated as he watched Xanxus’s expression carefully. The man didn’t really let anything show. “I’ve liked him since we were kids. You don’t know how lucky you are to have his affection. I know he likes you but you’re treating him like shit and I can’t just stand by and watch him take the abuse. Kacchan deserves someone better. If you can’t be better to him, let him go.”

Midoriya should feel a little nervous about doing this but he couldn’t get the image of Katsuki all worked up over Xanxus’s safety out of his head.

Xanxus started laughing.

“What kind of crack are you on?” Xanxus’s Japanese was scarily fluent but his words were foul. “So you’re here to declare how you want to take the brat from me. For fuck’s sake, the shitty shark or the Sawada brat would be a better competition than you. He’d probably even kiss Levi if he had to choose.”

Midoriya had no idea who shitty shark or Levi were but from the way Xanxus said their names, they were probably not the most popular choices in a dating pool.

“Fuck off. You either have a bad sense of humor or a head full of air if you think you got a chance.”

“I’m not kidding,” Midoriya said. “I’m willing to fight you for him.”

It was absolutely cheating for a hero student to challenge a civilian but Midoriya was willing to do anything to get together with Kacchan. It made more sense for them to be together and he would never treat Kacchan as horribly as Xanxus did.

“You have no idea what you’re doing.” Xanxus waved dismissively. “Fight me for him? That bitch’s got legs, if he wants you he can walk away from me on his own. He hasn’t so who the fuck are you to budge in and play knight in shinning armor?”

Midoriya felt his cheeks heating up, both from Xanxus pointing out the painful truth and from how little the man thought of Katsuki.

“You are the one that’s hurting him. I don’t know why Kacchan stays with you but that doesn’t change the fact that you hurt him. You scream insults and throw things at him, degrade him in public and nobody deserves that. How can you claim you love him when you do all these nasty things to him?”

Xanxus arched an eyebrow. “What idiot told you I love him or that he loves me?”

Wait what?

Midoriya was confused. Katsuki and Xanxus were dating weren’t they?

Seeing his confusion, Xanxus scoffed. He gestured to someone behind Midoriya and said, “Take care of this farce.”

The green haired teen felt himself being shoved aside and when he turned around, he was met with a pair of angry red eyes.

“What the fuck do you think you’re doing?” Katsuki hissed at him. He slapped Midoriya so harshly that the latter’s head turned sideways. “Why the hell are you bothering my boyfriend?”

Midoriya could feel his cheek burning with a stingy pain. “I was just looking out for you. Kacchan, he really isn’t a good guy and you–”

“That is not your fucking problem!” Kacchan interrupted him while shoving Midoriya back, away from Xanxus. “You’re just my classmate, you don’t get a say in how my boyfriend treats me or how I treat him. I already told you I’m not interested in you and you decide that your best course of action is to directly challenge him for me? I’m not a fucking prize to be won over after a brawl!”

Katsuki crossed his arms in front of his chest. Midoriya could see a few of their classmates dropping their luggages and running towards them. Todoroki got here first since he was the closest and he pulled Midoriya back.

“Midoriya, this is enough.” Todoroki hooked his arms under Midoriya’s armpits and pulled him harder, trying to drag him back.

Midoriya shook him off. He had gotten angry too, frustrated over how Kacchan simply didn’t *get* it. It was obvious as daylight that Xanxus was a toxic person who was taking advantage of the blond. The Bakugous wanted their child back and they were counting on Midoriya to do so.

“He should already know that he’s not treating you right,” Midoriya said. “I just told him that I don’t like how he treats you like a toy and that I like you more than he does. What does he have that I don’t? Just because he is richer and older? Xanxus yells at you as if you’re a mutt and you still kiss up to him. What happened to the Kacchan I know? He’d never let anybody control him like that! He changed you. What happened to the old Kacchan, the one that’s proud and amazing? Why would you rather let him call you a whore than even listening to a friend?”

Katsuki was bristling. “You’re *not* my friend! I already told you I don’t like you! No means no. No is as much of a complete fucking sentence as a yes. I don’t owe you a damn reason about why I don’t want to date or befriend you so stop being such a creep and back off!”

“See! You’re doing it again! You just push people who want nothing but the best for you away! You can’t even stop and have a peaceful conversation about why you do things your way.” Midoriya took a step closer to him but Iida and Todoroki’s hands grabbed him first.

“Midoriya, you need to calm down. Bakugou, you too, please step back.” Iida pushed Midoriya back further.

“If you really are this stubborn then fine!” Katsuki placed his hands on his waist, standing up taller with a straight back and a sneer. “I don’t like you because you’re shorter than me, only speak Japanese and English, look like a twig compared to Xanxus, and you’re not as rich. You can’t tell the difference between a dining and salad fork, don’t know the wine selection of the year, and can’t even tie a fucking tie. I don’t like your freckles and I don’t like your creepy muttering. Nothing about you turns me on or even remotely makes me want to be

anywhere near you. Oh, and you *never* gave a damn about what I thought. You have your precious little imagination of who 'Kacchan' is and any time I don't fit those criterias, you shit on me in an attempt to get me to conform."

He narrowed his eyes.

"Xanxus has his faults but you're the one who doesn't care what I think or what I want. When you ask me a question, you have already picked all the acceptable answers in your head for me. You just want me to play the role you decided I should have so you can live your fucking happy fantasy. You don't own me, I was never yours to begin with so stop being so offended on my behalf when you have absolutely no say in who I date and how my relationship works. While you might think Xanxus is a dick, in reality you are the shitty bastard. He listens to what I have to say. You just want me to tailor everything to you. I don't even know where your obsession with me came from. Get a fucking life, loser! I. Don't. Want. To. Be. With. You. And I'd rather get run over by a truck than ever having to kiss you."

His chest was heaving when he finished his long rant.

Midoriya hadn't known words could cut so deep and or how a "no" could hurt so much. Is that what Kacchan saw him as? A creep too deep in his fantasies?

"But all I've ever wanted was for you to be happy," Midoriya murmured while tears gathered in his eyes.

"Well, you sure don't act like it. You trash on my boundaries *repeatedly* when I already made it clear how much I hate it and you have your head up your ass about how I should be." Katsuki continued to spill venom through his words. "Xanxus gave me people who accepted me for me and promised me a future. You don't actually want me to be happy, the diagram of your dream of happiness is a damn circle with my worst nightmare, which you don't care about at all so long as you get what you want! Don't act like the victim here. You are a selfish piece of shit who couldn't take no for an answer and simply can't get it through your thick skull that I don't like you. Never have and never will!"

His voice lingered in the night air and Midoriya felt numb. He would carve his heart out and hand it to Kacchan on a silver platter but this was how his feelings were returned? It was as if Kacchan had spat on his heart, threw it on the ground, stomped it flat and then peeled that

dust covered organ up to throw it back at Midoriya's face.

"All you do is ignore me and it's not fair that you never gave me the same chance to prove myself. I didn't disregard your boundaries. I already apologized for trying to kiss you–"

Xanxus interjected with sharp teeth, "You did what to my brat?"

Katsuki's face paled immediately and he threw himself in front of his boyfriend. "Xanxus, it's alright, he didn't actually–"

The man pushed him aside and grabbed Midoriya by the front of his collar. His fingers felt heated, almost as if they were burning but that would be impossible. Xanxus was quirkless. But he certainly didn't feel like one. Staring at him face on was like trying to glare at lava or being just inches away from an inferno.

Stubborn bravado and terror rooted Midoriya's feet to the ground. As much as he wanted to run to his room and cry, he couldn't bring himself to do it. Not when all of his classmates were around to see this shameful moment or when his enemy, Xanxus, was right before him. Midoriya didn't even know what to think about Kacchan. The boy he loved cutted him with such a nasty and blunt rejection that his whole world felt as if it was crashing down.

It was All Might who stepped in. The No.1 hero was in his large form and he grabbed Xanxus's wrist, stopping the man from punching Midoriya.

"I have to ask you to release my student," he boomed, voice firm and threatening.

Xanxus let go of Midoriya, tossing him on the ground carelessly. He chuckled with evil gleaming in his eyes as he met All Might's gaze without any hint of fear. "I don't suppose you showed this amount of care when that little git tried to kiss my brat against his will? I don't give a damn what rank of a hero you are or how old they are. Don't give me any crap about how they are just confused teenagers either. If I can tell a dog to not eat unless ordered to, your student should be more than capable of understanding what no means and have the self control to go with it."

He was absolutely saying that Midoriya was less than a dog.

"Young Midoriya was in the wrong for not asking for permission," All Might said. "But as a teacher, I cannot stand by and watch a grown

man from outside of school beat up my student. You raise a hand against him and it will be considered assault."

"And what about his continuous creepy efforts to get into Katsuki's pants? Why does Katsuki have to put up with this nuisance?"

"Appropriate punishments will be dealt out. This is not a problem fixable by violence."

"Obviously you're not creative enough," Xanxus mocked.

"Xanxus!" Katsuki knocked Xanxus on the arm, shoving his boyfriend back. "Look, I got this. It's getting late and you have a flight to catch so just go."

Xanxus grabbed him by the chin and pulled him in for a kiss. Midoriya heard a few gasps from his classmates but all he could do was clenched his fists so tight to the point where his nails dug into his palms and drew blood.

When the man released a breathless Katsuki, he had a wicked glint in his eyes. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and walked back towards his car. Without looking back, Xanxus gave them the middle finger.

"Any more of this high school drama shit and you're transferring to Shiketsu," he barked roughly, "that's an *order*, trash."

Kirishima and the rest of the Bakusquad looked worried but before they could make a comment, Kacchan casted his gaze to the ground without any hint of defiance.

"Yes, Xanxus."

Chapter End Notes

> I think Xanxus came off as a little too tame in here but I feel it'd make sense since he's not an idiot who would go against omertà and fight the NO.1 hero of Japan out in the open (especially when Katsuki wants to be a hero). Also, he really doesn't see Midoriya as a competition. Xanxus is Varia's boss and Midroiya is just a hero kid who isn't even pro yet. Xanxus has trust in Kastuki to stay loyal to him and they are mingled too deep for Katsuki to just leave everything (his bond with the other Varia members, Victoire, finances, all the mafia secrets he knows, etc) for Midoriya. He's more annoyed that a fly thinks it had the right to

be so noisy around Katsuki than actually mad.

...is he going to stage some unfortunate accidents to happen when Midoriya is off campus? Well, maybe ;) The mafia works in the dark and Varia specializes in mysterious/impossible kills after all.

Katsuki is a bit complex. He is more Xanxus's cloud guardian at the end of this chap than Katsuki the hero kid. As long as Xanxus's order doesn't interfere with him becoming a hero, Katsuki is pretty flexible in following Xanxus's orders. Hope that makes sense?

Writing Inko in this chap reminds me of the news I saw about a mom pouring bubble tea on a teen girl because her son stole money from home. She thinks that he is paying for them but the girls actually paid for everything themselves. So kind of the my son is so great and can do nothing wrong. you all bad for not appreciating him kind of vibe XD

As for Midoriya, he is getting angrier at Kacchan for what he perceives as unfair discrimination by excluding him as a possible dating choice so there might be a physical fight between them soon before he fully gives up.

Chapter 36: Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Lunch time at any school was usually when the students were the rowdiest. Today, the students of 1-A all gathered nearby each other, taking up two tables.

“You guys heard about what happened last night, right?” Kirishima whispered to his friends. “Bakubro really gave it to Midoriya without holding back. That was brutal.”

“I don’t think I could have shown my face anywhere for the next ten years if someone rejected me that way.” Kaminari also kept his voice low. Midoriya had been called to a meeting with the teachers and Bakugou wanted to be alone. They just kept their volume down because it really wasn’t all that great to be gossiping over such a… dramatic event. “Do you think it’s enough to turn down Midoriya?”

Sero shook his head. “I don’t know…but hopefully Midoriya gets the idea.”

That was a big fat NO from Bakugou and none of them had no idea how anybody else could make a rejection even clearer.

“Bakugou sure tore Midoriya down in all ways possible,” Sato shuddered. Bakugou didn’t miss a thing as he dissed Midoriya from appearance to personality and to wealth and social status. He basically rejected everything Midoriya was.

Hagakure sighed. “He was kind of asking for it though. I mean, not to sound mean but Bakugou already rejected him before and is already in a relationship.”

“It would have been better if Midoriya backed off after that incident and waited until Bakugou and Xanxus broke up, that’s for sure.” Yaoyorozu didn’t have strong confidence in Midoriya getting together with Bakugou from the start but seeing how brutal the rejection was, she couldn’t help but feel conflicted. On one hand, it felt like a very justified and well-deserved wake up call but on the other end it was so hard to hear how everything went down.

There were multiple moments just filled with so much cringe that

Yaoyorozu was starting to wonder if love really did make people dumber. Did Midoriya not realize what kind of words were coming out of his mouth?

“Xanxus has guts though,” Ojiro added while a sweat dropped from his forehead. "The way he talked to All Might was just whoa…I can’t imagine facing All Might when he’s got that expression on."

Tokoyami ate an apple while mumbling, “A man of darkness.”

“To top it off, he’s quirkless and he had the balls to try and get into a fist fight with Midoriya.”

That was probably the most impressive thing of all. Ever since the sports festival, it was difficult to imagine anybody to not know their quirks. Midoriya had a strength enhancing quirk that could match All Might yet Xanxus, who had no superpower, showed no hesitation about wanting to punch him.

Not everybody in class saw it. Kirishima would say mostly it was just him, Todoroki, Iida, Tsuyu who was throwing out garbage with Aoyama, and maybe Shoji and Jirou who had enhanced hearing or sight. But since it was such a big thing, they filled in all their classmates so no one would be stepping on landmines any time soon.

“Honestly, if Bakugou didn’t stop him, I think he might even want to fight All Might too.” Kirishima scratched his neck nervously. It was the teacher’s job to protect them, which Kirishima appreciated and he totally understood where All Might was coming from but a tiny portion of him had hoped that Xanxus actually landed a punch on Midoriya.

Maybe that would wake the green haired teen up and allow him to see reality.

But also, it was bad for an adult to be hitting a teenager and Kirishima wouldn’t want his friend’s boyfriend to put himself in harm’s way. That would make Bakugou upset for sure.

“I have to say,” Iida said while placing his finished bowl down. “As much as I do not approve of Xanxus’s highly questionable character, Midoriya did went too far this time.”

They were Midoriya’s friends and although Iida wasn’t really a fan of Bakugou’s volatile personality, he didn’t want his classmate to be in danger or damaging relationships either. If Bakugou and Midoriya

getting together meant they were happy, Iida actually had no problem congratulating him (of course, with the added condition that this wasn't another abusive relationship). He didn't approve of breaking up relationships but he also didn't want to see Midoriya moping around… but he hadn't expected Midoriya to be this bold either. Iida wouldn't say it was strange to be open and honest about having feelings for somebody, but continuously trying to strongarm the other person into a new relationship was indeed very absurd.

"I have been thinking about what Bakugou said," admitted Todoroki in his usual monotone. "Now that I think about it, Bakugou was constantly telling Midoriya *No* even in class. I just thought that Midoriya was being kind and reaching out despite Bakugou's hostility, which was kind of admirable but now…it does look a little odd."

What he didn't say was that it verged a bit on the obsessive side.

This was the first time Todoroki had friends and he was very uncertain about a lot of things. Friends were supposed to care about each other and help each other, which he thought he was doing a pretty decent job at. Midoriya and the others also made him comfortable enough that he felt he could share his thoughts with them or just hang out together. They were supportive of each other, which was why Todoroki didn't say anything too demoralizing when Midoriya confessed he loved Bakugou.

Todoroki didn't think it was a very good match. Midoriya was the opposite of Bakugou and Bakugou had an attitude that could make anybody's blood boil in an instant. Also, he was already in what sounded like a very messy relationship that didn't need more fuel added to the fire.

But love was blind like Fuyumi said and Midoriya had it bad.

"I guess they really just don't click. I'd say Bakugou's rejection was overwhelmingly harsh but it is exactly what Izuku-kun asked for," Uraraka winced. Bakugou wasn't a liar so what he told Midoriya must be exactly what he thought. To learn exactly how much the one he loved despised him…yikes, Uraraka felt really bad for Midoriya. She hadn't been on the scene when the confrontation broke out but even hearing it from someone else made her very uncomfortable, for both Midoriya and Bakugou.

She wanted to be supportive of Midoriya's pursuit in love but seeing how Midoriya was absolutely fumbling through the situation, Uraraka

could feel her soul dying along with the second hand embarrassment. Bakugou was so overly, explicitly, bluntly clear that he wanted nothing to do with Midoriya and Uraraka simply couldn't understand where the infatuation stemmed from any longer. She also felt a bit sorry for Bakugou having to deal with this. Even for him, being this up front about all his thoughts was very uncommon.

"I know Bakugou is very attractive and smart but Izuku-kun really has to give up now."

Bakugou was more willing to be run over by a truck than to be with Midoriya. That spoke volumes. While Uraraka wouldn't think that death was better than dating someone so kind hearted and strong like Midoriya, dating was a very personal preference.

If Bakugou liked Xanxus's toxicity, she supposed there really wasn't anything they could do.

"We have to help separate them too…" Kirishima said, this time there was worry in his eyes. "Otherwise Bakugou is going to transfer to another school!"

He didn't want to lose his friend. While Kirishima knew they could still talk by texting or phone it just wasn't the same.

"Don't you think it's a little worrying that Bakugou didn't object to switching schools when Xanxus said it was an order?" Shoji's mouth opened on the tip of his tentacle.

"Yeah! What was with that?" Mina was also super confused, not just because her proud friend who didn't like authority was being obedient but also the way Xanxus phrased things was just too weird. "Who *orders* their other half around like that?"

The way the man said it was more like a figure of authority, somebody of higher position and power, talking down to their subordinates and calling the shots. She could see Bakugou possibly wanting to argue when Xanxus only said he was transferring if there was any more drama. However, the fire in the blond's eyes diminished once Xanxus announced it was an order.

"This is kind of reminding me about that movie where the girl is cursed to do whatever everybody else orders her to," said Kaminari with a scratch of his head. "Cause this is Bakugou we are talking about…why would he just take it?"

“Maybe it’s like Midoriya, love makes people do weird things.”

But Kaminari’s speculation also made the rest of the class

Iida hummed. “We could talk to Aizawa-sensei about it.” If there was a quirk behind why Bakugou was listening to Xanxus’s orders like they were the holy gospel, their teacher should be able to cancel it out.

“If it is a quirk, wouldn’t it be canceled a long time ago?” Tsuyu pointed out. They had all been subjected to their teacher’s quirk at least once before during training.

“We might not be asking the right questions when he’s in that state.” Most of the time they were focused on class. No one was really going up to Bakugou and asking how he felt about his boyfriend while Aizawa-sensei had his quirk activated.

“Well, it is worth a try but I’m going to check on Bakubro first.”

Because if there was one thing that Bakugou absolutely hated, it was people putting their noses into his business without asking first.

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“Alright Midoriya,” Aizawa-sensei sat down with the dark aura rivaling the trumpets of doomsday being sounded. “This little crush of yours is becoming a problem so we’re going to talk about it.”

Midoriya lowered his head in shame. They were in an office right beside the teacher’s lounge, which was mostly used for talks with students who were in trouble but not so much trouble that it required Principal Nedzu’s attention yet. The place was relatively empty, with just a desk and four chairs, kind of like an interrogation room but not as cold or uncomfortable.

“Let’s start with the basics. You like Bakugou, yes?”

“Yes. I’ve like him ever since we were kids and–”

“Midoriya, no rambling please. Just answer what I asked.”

Midoriya immediately quieted down. All Might was seated right beside him but even having his favorite hero here didn’t help ease his nerves. He felt like he messed up and his heart was still aching so much from Kacchan’s harsh rejection.

Would the blond really rather die than to be with him? Midoriya

didn't know why Kacchan would go to such extremes. He knew he could be a good spouse, he would be such a lovely boyfriend or husband as long as Kacchan gave him a chance. Everything that Katsuki said about him…those were attributes he couldn't change. To have so many fundamental parts of him being denied and trashed on was so humiliating and thinking about that made him depressed, made him want to curl into a ball and cry.

"You've already confessed to Bakugou once when he was cooking, which he then rejected you. And you immediately proceeded to attempt to kiss him, prompting him to almost stab you with the cooking knife," Aizawa recounted what had happened in the dorm. "Do you see the problem there? What had you hoped to achieve by kissing him?"

"I don't know," Midoriya admitted and the heat was rising on his cheeks. "I-I just thought…I just wanted to show him how I feel and how serious I was cause he was brushing me off."

"And then maybe he'd magically realize he is actually also in love with you because of true love's kiss," Aizawa-sensei added for him in a bland and disapproving tone. "Real life doesn't work like that, Midoriya. I thought you've already reflected on this issue of consent. At no point did Bakugou gave you permission to kiss or touch him intimately."

"Yes, sensei…I have realized my mistake."

Aizawa-sensei sighed. "So your next course of action is not to touch Bakugou but go directly to his boyfriend and challenge him."

"I wasn't challenging him."

"Then what were you doing?"

"I was confronting him about how he was treating Kacchan." Midoriya was compelled to explain his actions. Sure, he had wanted to make Xanxus know that he planned to take Kacchan from him but more than that, Midoriya was just disgusted by how the man treats Katsuki. "You saw how he acted towards Kacchan. He throws stuff at him, calls him names, treats him terribly in general and he makes Kacchan upset constantly. The whole class heard them arguing on the phone the other day. Plus…"

Midoriya wasn't sure if he could say the next part out loud. The Bakugous sure wanted this to be quietly dealt with, right? But they

were also threatened and maybe if the heroes got involved…no, the heroes couldn't do anything when nothing had happened yet.

"Plus what?" Aizawa-sensei pressed.

Midoriya looked down, hands trembling.

"Young Midoriya, if there is something we don't know that impacted how you acted, we need to know." All Might's voice was calming but not truly encouraging as Midoriya's mind battled itself. "We cannot make a fair judgment unless you are truthful with us."

"There's no evidence."

"That will be our job to find if there is something darker going on. We are concerned about Young Bakugou's safety as well but we cannot help if we have no idea what we are dealing with."

Midoriya sniffled, looking up at the two adult heroes, he decided to come clean.

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Aizawa very much wanted to throw all his problematic children into the school swimming pool so they could cool off. Teenagers, god, he never imagined teen romance could get so troublesome.

He knew Midoriya hadn't given up on his crush on Bakugou after the almost knife to the face incident.
But he was a teenage boy and while Aizawa couldn't fully relate to loving someone so passionately, he knew how stupid kids could get. They do dumb things as they tried to figure out the world, that was natural and although embarrassing, it wasn't something that required intervention.

Love could fade with time, a broken heart was healable and Midoriya was so young that Aizawa was sure he would meet other people who would return his feelings in the future. Bakugou on the other hand, well, Aizawa couldn't really say that his actions were out of scope with reality. He had a hot temper and there was no way he would allow unwanted intimacy without putting up a fight.

Aizawa didn't like Xanxus. The man was merely too…*dangerous* in Aizawa's eyes. There was also the age difference and all the other stuff that made him seem less and less like a good choice of a partner but Bakugou loved him. His parents were notified and they haven't

reached out asking for the school to blacklist Xanxus or requested UA to intervene further. As teachers, they couldn't just meddle with the student's private life with a snap of their fingers either. That was crossing a boundary and Bakugou gave them absolutely no reason to investigate further when he didn't show up with any physical injuries and his grades unaffected. His mental health, as far as Aizawa could tell, was in a decent condition too. There was never fear in his eyes when his friends brought up Xanxus, just pride and adoration.

Those weren't the eyes of an abused victims or a brainwashed slave's.

Aizawa didn't expect Midoriya to kick up such a big fuss after getting rejected.

He regretted letting All Might cover him for half an hour while he got a power nap. It was just such a mess. Aizawa had already heard Bakugou and the other student witness's side of the story. He heard All Might out too and Aizawa wouldn't say the NO.1 hero did something wrong. It was their job as educators to prevent the students from enduring unauthorized bodily harm outside of training. Also, it would reflect very poorly on the school if an outsider just beat up one of their kids on campus.

A small part of Aizawa was astonished at how a quirkless man had the courage to stand up to All Might and was even willing to fight a hero student. He supposed it made sense though. Xanxus was a man who looked like he was very much into the whole traditional masculinity ideas and someone claiming to want to take his lover must be triggering. Even normal people , Aizawa imagined anybody would get angry (maybe not get riled up physically, but certainly angry) if someone just came up and told them they weren't worthy of their partners and out right challenged them.

This was where Midoriya was wrong, the second time around. He could tell Xanxus that he liked Bakugou, but he really had no right to insinuate that Xanxus should hand Bakugou over to him. That was both an insult to Xanxus and a complete disregard of Bakugou's thoughts.

Then Midoriya told him about the verbal threats the Bakugous received. Yes, Aizawa would call them threats. It was not explicit as a gun to the head but the underlying coercion was there. However, he immediately frowned at the thought of the Bakugous succumbing to the wishes of Xanxus's father when he implied that he would mess with their business.

Was this the same as selling their son for money? Aizawa wasn't sure though because Bakugou obviously wanted to stay with Xanxus and there were no monetary incentives provided to the Bakugous. He could understand why the Bakugous were afraid too. The threat to their livelihood was definitely no joke and it would be hard to prove. Nobody could go up to a sponsor and force them to go through with a contract, not when they were perfectly willing to pay any penalties as long as they got to pull out of an event they no longer wish to be connected with. Even if after a lengthy court battle the Bakugous were determined to be in the right, for their field, getting on the bad side of one influential sponsor was already deadly. A show was nothing if no models, artists or audiences came.

He filed this thought away for the time being.

"I see, and you felt it is up to you to help Bakugou see how horrible his boyfriend's family is." Aizawa stared at Midoriya, whose shoulders were still shaking slightly. "Have you considered the fact that Bakugou knew about this and went along with it?"

Midoriya's mouth opened but no sound came out.

"I believe he already knows if this happened during his parent's meeting with Xanxus. Meaning, Bakugou still wants to stay with Xanxus." That was a very tricky situation. Aizawa needed time to reflect on it because he couldn't decide if that made Bakugou a bad kid or not. It certainly wasn't something as black and white as if he had beaten his parents up or stole from a convenience store. "Putting that aside for now, I want to address an observation I had since the school year started. It looks to me that you have a fixation on your relationship with Bakugou, which is progressively interfering with your studies and life in a very unhealthy fashion. I talked with your friends already and they told me you and Bakugou were childhood friends and you went to the same schools all the way until now. Since I was concerned about a few other things about you, problem child, I took the liberty of going through your files and saw inconsistencies."

He started laying out a few pictures and files on the desk. They were stuff he found from looking into Aldera Middle and Aizawa absolutely didn't like what he found. This school was run by sickos who valued strong quirks and dished out unfair treatments for the rest of the less fortunate. The teachers only wanted to produce high statistics of kids getting into good highschools and provided very biased and skewed reports for students they didn't like or found to be not worth any investment. Naturally, the students picked up on the signals and they

too turned into bullies. Nedzu had agreed to help Aizawa build a case against such a horrendously revolting institution. They were not fit to be a school and all those teachers who participated in the discrimination should have their license revoked and jailed.

“Your quirk developed late and you have been labeled quirkless up until then,” he said, not missing anything on both Midoriya and All Might’s faces. “This explains a lot of the twitchiness and self-deprecating tendencies I see in you, which is something I hope we can help you work on. UA also has a lot of resources in this aspect. Although it is late, we will also be bringing these bastards to justice so they can’t harm any more kids. So now my most important question is: Was Bakugou involved in your bullying?”

Midoriya bit his bottom lip and there were tears spinning in his eyes.

“…I don’t know?” the boy said in a timid voice. “I don’t know if it counts as bullying. We were friends before but then his quirk came in, it was so powerful and that he suddenly got busier. He’s always running off to places and then there’s me…who gets left behind all the time. He’s brash and loud and just the type of guy people liked in the spotlight. They keep telling him he’d be a great hero one day and I’m mostly used to compare to him. I’m clumsy and nerdy and useless while he’s great in every way. I don’t know why he doesn’t like me, even as friends. I want to be a hero just like he does but he’d scoff and just don’t care at all, as if he knew I’d never make it and he’d watch me with cold eyes, mocking me.”

He looked at Aizawa. “I asked him for help, he would walk away. I tried catching up to him but he just kept running further and further ahead. It hurts to see him do that. I don’t know where we went wrong.”

That didn’t sound like the traditional type of bullying. Aizawa tapped his finger on the table, his thumb moving over the ink of letters stating all of Aldera’s crimes. Bullying came in many different forms and social exclusion was one of them but unfortunately, it was also the one that was very hard to pinpoint a right and wrong on. No teacher could force all children to be friends with each other. They could be made to cooperate but friendship or anything further was a whole different thing.

It was clear that Bakugou didn’t enjoy Midoriya’s company and he was not obligated to provide his friendship to everybody he met. He might not have had any malicious intentions when he didn’t hang out with

Midoriya but there could be unintended consequences with the other kids following his lead. Yet, even that might be considered a stretch. Aizawa had learned from his scouting of Aldera that Bakugou spent almost all his waking moments either in school or learning other subjects. This was confirmed by teaching staff, neighbors, and previous classmates. He had mastered multiple languages and he participated in plenty of sports. His time was so occupied that he barely had five minute breaks to chat with anybody. This habit followed him into UA and it was rare for them to drag him out to play. Thus, it was probably better suited to say Bakugou was isolating himself than actively excluding anybody else.

What was Bakugou to do anyways? Just swallow how much he was uncomfortable with Midoriya's presence until the latter was satisfied?

Neither sounded like good tactics.

"Sensei, I don't really think Kacchan bullied me. I don't want to get him in trouble either and I know even though he makes some bad choices, he can be a really good hero. If we offer him a chance, he *can* be better."

"Midoriya." Aizawa held up a hand as something fleeted past his mind. There was something odd going on around here and he didn't like it. "Has Bakugou ever actively harassed you? I'm not talking about his habit of calling everybody 'trash' and being rough. I mean actually insulting you for no reason or laying a hand on you such as using his quirk to make a threat that isn't about asking you to leave him alone."

Midoriya thought for a moment before frowning. "...No."

And there it was. Aizawa wouldn't deny that Bakugou had some behavioral issues but not caring was not the equivalent of harassment. It was starting to sound like Midoriya's low self-esteem painted Bakugou in a very bad light in Midoriya's eyes, which was understandable. The boys grew up together and the difference in watching Bakugou grow up being praised while he was shoved to the background could be depressing and discouraging.

"If I may ask, Eraserhead," All Might coughed. "How are you going to handle this situation? I do believe we have enough grounds to ban Xanxus from being on UA's campus. He has exhibited violent tendencies towards our students."

"That would be up to Nedzu to decide. Xanxus doesn't have a criminal

record in Japan or Italy and Midoriya provoked him first. He is not in the country often, so I doubt a ban on our campus affects anything. The Bakugous, all three of them, have not come forward with enough of an accusation to get a restraining order. I highly doubt Bakugou himself would be willing to do that either. We can provide advice but we cannot physically dictate a student's private life in detail." Aizawa rubbed the bridge of his nose, tired already. "Bakugou has not done anything offensive other than express, in very clear terms, that he has no desire to date Midoriya. That isn't against the law or school code. Midoriya, however, I'd like you to start counseling sessions with Hound Dog."

He stared at Midoriya, who visibly gulped.

"I believe it is time you let go of this crush but I know we can't rush feelings. So, for the time being, please just be honest and work with Hound Dog about what you are comfortable with. It can be about your middle school days or even simply how you feel about dinner. If he sees anything that needs to be addressed, we will tackle it from there. But I will not be pairing you with Bakugou for any exercises until Hound Dog approves. For your persistence in bothering Bakugou despite his multiple rejections, you will have a four day suspension but you will be using this time to help around the campus instead of brooding in your room."

Because clearly the last punishment didn't work and Aizawa would like Midoriya to remain somewhere where a staff or another more senior student could see him in case he came up with any more bright ideas again.

He might also need to switch Midoriya to an even further seat away from Bakugou. Bakugou agreeing with Xanxus's order to switch schools if any more problem with Midoriya arose…he must have had enough with Midoriya. While Aizawa was uncomfortable in analyzing how much Bakugou's compliance was due to Xanxus's authoritarian influences and how much was due to a pure desire to get away from Midoriya, he'd guess the chances were 50/50.

Which wasn't good either. Aizawa didn't think Bakugou would be willing to give up his No.1 spot in UA so easily.

Midoriya nodded grimly. All Might patted him on the shoulder and Aizawa let out a breath as they left. He still had more headaches to sort through. The school had security cameras all around, also bugs to record conversations because of all the media always trying to sneak

in. The confrontation that happened was captured on tape and Aizawa was pretty sure there was no other way to say how uninterested Bakugou was in Midoriya. He raised a few good points, some of which were personal preferences about appearance, which Aizawa completely understood.

It was unreasonable to force everybody to be attracted to everybody, no matter what their physical state looked like. Attraction didn't work like that and anybody forcing people to do so was pushing boundaries.

The main problem was that the security cameras didn't capture Xanxus. Not one bit of the man was on camera. His car was parked at a blindspot and even when All Might confronted him, he had been right at the edge outside of the camera's capture range.

It was as if he knew where the cameras were stationed.

That was a giant red flag even if they disregard the whole violent situation between him and Bakugou. Speaking of Bakugou, Aizawa needed to talk to him next about if he really was transferring schools.

Aizawa drank his coffee while suppressing the urge to curse at the heavens.

Teaching was way too hard of a fucking job.

2

There were scented candles burning in his room. Blue candles held up in silver candle holders decorated with gold leaves were placed on his desk. The room smelled slightly sweet, like blueberries mixed with a faint scent of citrus.

Katsuki painted his lips in a sparkly glossy pink in his room illuminated by soft warm lights.

Studying his face in the mirror, he decided that this would be enough makeup for tonight's stream. Thanks to his mom's genes, he didn't need too much foundation to keep his skin looking flawless. Instead of going heavy, he decided to keep things light and only added a bit of blush to his cheeks. Despite the stupid clash with Deku two nights ago, he felt pretty good tonight.

At first, Katsuki couldn't believe the audacity of Midoriya to approach Xanxus.

Who did he think he was to be challenging the head of Varia for Katsuki's hand? Katsuki wasn't an object to be passed around! He was his own person and he followed his sky willingly. Xanxus, although horrible and cruel in his own right, made Katsuki feel at home. He never once made Katsuki feel out of place or scrutinized him for not being the picture perfect child the adults wanted. This man had the backbone to take all of Katsuki's bad side without getting hurt or faltering and never complained once when Katsuki just needed someone to *listen* to him bitch about life.

He knew he wouldn't be the topmost priority in Xanxus's life but the man kissed him with fervor, with passion and care that he had never felt with anybody else before. Xanxus's tenderness didn't show in remembering their anniversaries or saying sweet love. It was in the way of how when he took Katsuki to bed that he never left any lasting damage despite being rough, never made Katsuki bleed and always stopped as long as Katsuki refused outright. Although he looked violent, his grasp on Katsuki was calculated, easy to get away from if Katsuki got serious and rarely meant to actually harm. His affection was in his silent hugs as both of them read quietly in his study or chilled in bed doing nothing.

Katsuki supposed he was the pot calling the kettle black when he said Squalo was a masochist. The swordsman could dodge the stuff Xanxus threw at him easily but he chose not to. Katsuki was the same when he allowed Xanxus to shoved him around all rough and demanded submission. To others, it looked wrong to have Xanxus touch him this way but he longed for the heat of the man's scarred skin, a warmth that ensured he always had a place somewhere, with family who were crazy but loved him no less.

Midoriya would never know how much feverish joy Katsuki felt when Xanxus told Squalo to authorize him the highest security clearance to everything under Varia. The green haired teen would never understand how much Katsuki wanted to cry when he realized all the trust funds set up under his name and having access to Xanxus's banking information. Or how much he wanted to scream in glee when Xanxus allowed him to touch his gun collection and occasionally do the maintenance work with him.

Xanxus never spoke about love. He *gave* it. For such a territorial man all about control, he gave care in the form of meaningful things that he knew Katsuki needed and would use, stuff that even if he was gone, Katsuki would continue to have access to and would never have to struggle because of it.

Riches and status. Power and control.

He gave what he valued as the best to Katsuki. To Katsuki, that was the equivalent of Xanxus giving him his heart already.

Deku could never understand how complicated yet romantic this was.

Kirishima told him that Deku was going to therapy sessions with Hound Dog and the class had been pretty quiet around him lately. It wasn't too bad. Katsuki liked his quiet and drama-free school time. There was that one weird encounter where Mina asked him if he was happy with Xanxus repeatedly before Aizawa walked in behind him to start class but it was nothing. He kind of expected it when Xanxus nearly got into a fist fight with All Might right in front of them all. His boyfriend was an idiot but a competent idiot who was no joke in martial arts. Katsuki very much expected him to be able to land some punches on All Might if they were being serious, which would be very suspicious.

Also, of course he was happy with his sky. Mina asked some weird questions.

He stripped out of his baggy sweats. Katsuki always knew he looked good but he still checked himself out in the mirror to make sure that he hadn't been slacking on any parts. Mammon would come flying after him if he didn't look his best on camera. His eyes went to the dark red little buds in front of his chest and he could feel blood rushing to his face when he suddenly remembered how Xanxus played with them, biting him and licking him–okay, stop. He couldn't get horny before work!

Bel got him a new dress and Katsuki thought it would be good to wear that tonight. It was a rather simple one considering Bel's taste. Just a dark blue sundress that had a bit of white near the bottom. It was casual enough since he wasn't doing any seriously formal promotions tonight. His room was rather plain normally but when he was doing his shows, he'd pull out cute little star shaped lights to go on the wall and grab his soft fluffy pillows to place on his bed.

When Katsuki was finally satisfied with his look, he turned on the camera.

"Hi everybody!" He beamed, putting on Victoire's sweet mask.

Victoire was a dream built on the concept of sugar, spice, and all things nice. She was a cover story to keep the vultures off Xanxus's

back and an easy bait whenever Varia needed one. The model was an escape for him too, to pretend that he was always good and loved, freed from his parents' influences completely.

He was still free to chase his dream and do everything he wanted. It doesn't matter if he could never be himself and announce to the world that Xanxus was his. He would be Victoire, be the other master of the castle, Lady Varia or any other title people wanted to place on him to stay by the man's side.

After all, Katsuki was the cloud, floating high and ever changing, dancing with the storm and singing to the sun, accompanying lightning and aiding the rain. He was one of the elements.

But most importantly, none of them could exist without a sky.

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Uraraka stood in front of the green haired boy as she blocked him from heading down the stairs. "Izuku-kun, where are you going?"

"Just to the kitchen," Midoriya said while holding an empty mug in his hand.

"Please use the elevator with me."

She pulled him towards the elevator. It wasn't that she was scared of using it alone after the haunted story contest Mina started but Shoji texted him that Bakugou was going up the stairs so she had to keep Izuku away from bumping into Bakugou.

Their class decided to minimize contact between the two boys.

It wasn't that hard during school hours, especially since Aizawa-sensei looped in the other teachers and all of them were refraining from pairing Midoriya close to Bakugou no matter what class they were having. If they needed to go to the infirmary, Kirishima or Iida and Todoroki usually volunteered to go with them and stayed the whole time with them.

But in dorms, well, there could be issues. While Bakugou stayed in his room most of the time, he still had to venture out for food or do his laundry, so did Izuku. This was why the rest of them took it upon themselves to make sure they do not get into another argument or fight.

Uraraka wouldn't say she was very fond of Bakugou's personality but she also couldn't fault him for not wanting to date somebody. While she didn't really understand why he was annoyed with Izuku's harmless little personality quirks, it would be rude of her to be offended that he wouldn't date Izuku.

"You guys don't have to do this, I'm not going to go piss off Kacchan again."

"We're just being safe."

Or Bakugou was going to transfer and they would get a very depressed Bakusquad, which was something Uraraka didn't want. Kirishima and the rest of them were nice and she didn't want them to be sad.

Izuku already had no chance. She just hoped cake and ice cream could make him move on faster.

"Midoriya," Iida called when they arrived in the kitchen. "You got a package from your mom."

"Thank you, Iida." He opened the package. It was a pack of homemade cookies and Midoriya shared it with them. Uraraka liked them, they were sweet and made into really cute animal shapes.

"Your mom's been sending you a lot of food lately," Todoroki observed while helping everybody to a cup of tea. He wished his mom could do the same but right now, he was content with just getting letters from her. "Her cooking is improving greatly."

Everytime she sent stuff, they looked and tasted more amazing than the previous batch.

"She made a new friend at cooking class," Midoriya explained. "Actually, I've been meaning to ask if you guys want to come for a barbeque. My mom said her friend is planning to have a barbeque at the park with her kids. It's in Namimori."

That wasn't too far from here and since the villain threat had been lifted, if they notified Aizawa-sensei beforehand, it should be fine. Midoriya didn't plan on inviting his whole class since it wasn't his party to host but his mom did say he was allowed to bring a few friends over.

Uraraka didn't see any wrong with that. They could pool together some money to buy a melon as a gift. Namimori was also a very quiet

town with little to no criminal activities. It was just a barbeque, there couldn't be any harm in that right?

…She spoke too soon.

Uraraka stared at the brown haired teen running after a little boy dressed as a cow. The boy was energetic and had an Afro, the cow tail of his onesie swept behind him as he ran all over the park.

"Lambo! Stop! Come back here!" Sawada Tsunayoshi yelled after him. He reminded Uraraka of Izuku, with messy hair and large eyes, also a very gentle air about him.

"You stupid cow, stop being such a big trouble for everybody and sit down!" Gokudera, the silver haired delinquent who had glared at Izuku when they first showed up, grabbed the kid and shoved him into a baby chair.

"Lambo-sama doesn't want to eat peppers!"

"I-pin doesn't like peppers either!"

There was a little girl who looked and dressed in very traditional Chinese clothing that was the same age as Lambo. Another boy with auburn hair who was a bit older with European features and a long scarf patted both of them on the head.

"Don't bother Mama when she's cooking. It's dangerous," he warned.

The Sawada house had a lot of kids. The mother, Sawada Nana, was a cheerful woman who had the same shade of brown hair and eyes as her son.

She looked extra happy as she grilled meat with Midoriya's mother. "It's so nice to see all you kids show up. Eat up! We have a lot of food prepared."

"Mama's cooking is the best," a toddler being held by a girl complimented. He was dressed in a nice little suit completed with a hat. Such a cute little gentleman! The girl holding him had dark pink hair with a bit of red tint, she was also dressed in a very sexy fashion with a tiny sleeveless top and tight jeans.

There were more people that Uraraka didn't know. A boy with red hair and bandages on his face was being ordered around by a girl with curly ponytail and short skirt. She reminded Uraraka of Aizawa-sensei

and Iida for some reason, especially as she ordered the boys around her to get their grills set up.

This was an odd bunch. Uraraka couldn't see any large mutations on any of them (the girl dressed in bubbles didn't count, since that was part of her attire and not her quirk). But they got along well and looking at them was as if she was seeing a very large family coming together for a day of fun.

"Oh, have you guys already started? We got the drinks!" Sasagawa, if Uraraka remembered right, came running with two large bags filled with coke, pepsi, and other drinks in hand. Beside him was a tall green haired boy with glasses. Both of them had boxer bandages wrapped around their fingers. "Yamamoto also caught an extreme surprise."

Behind him, a dark haired teen with a wrapped up bamboo sword on his back was dragging along a very hissy Bakugou as if he was handling an uncooperative stray cat.

"I don't want your stupid meat."

"Come on, Katsuki. We're friends."

"We're not friends. I'm on Xanxus's side."

"See, friends!"

Oh no.

Uraraka couldn't stop Izuku and Bakugou's gaze from meeting.

Bakugou took one look at Izuku and scowled. Yamamoto's grin also froze a bit when he realized who was here. It was Sawada Tsunayoshi who saw the awkward silence and came over.

"Bakugou-kun, would you like something to eat? Mom's been wanting to thank you for tutoring me," he said while dragging Bakugou away, far away from Izuku. Uraraka felt the air shifted around her and she was sure she saw a few of the kids sharing glances with each other. It was as if there had been a silent code passed between them.

"Here, eat up. We whipped up our secret special sauce that I'm sure you'll love." A really large boy that was close to Fatgum's width came up to Uraraka's group, blocking all of their views of Bakugou, and shoved plates of food into all of their hands. He had thick lips like

Sato's and his hair was an ash brown color.

A hand dropped onto Uraraka's shoulder and it was Yamamoto. His other hand was on Izuku's shoulder and judging by how tight his grip was, Uraraka wouldn't take him lightly. He smiled at them. "Just enjoy the barbeque. None of us want any trouble for Mama today, am I right?"

"There better not be," Gokudera added in the form of something close to a threat, his eyes were sharp as he lit a cigarette and placed it in his mouth.

"It is illegal for minors to be smoking," Iida said, keeping his composure.

"Whatever, four-eyes. Just don't kick up a fuss and ruin this for everybody." Gokudera moved away but his eyes never left Midoriya, until he saw the girl with pink hair touching the ingredients. "Hey! Don't touch any of the food! You're banned from cooking! God, somebody stop her!"

He bent down, looking as if he had a tummy ache while others removed the girl from the section with all the food.

They really were a strange bunch.

Chapter End Notes

The picnic has has Sawada's tenth generation (except Chrome/ Mukuro and Hibari) and the Simon Family. The Simon family might not know what is going on but since their boss, Enma (the boy with the red hair and bandages) was there when Tsuna talked to Midoriya on the phone, he kind of get that it's a bad idea to put Xanxus's lover with the kid who likes him together.

Also, they are mafia, which is why they are more observant about the Bakugou's obvious and pure dislike towards Midoriya. They do not know Midoriya's group and Bakugou is considered to be more of the "in-group"/ally since he belonged to Varia and Vongola and Simon are ally families.

Also, Bianchi can't cook because she literally kills by poisonous cooking. Any ingredients that went through her hands become inedible

I really love all the comments so far and I'll get to replying to

them after I finish the next chapter in a few days, cause I'm on a roll with this fic recently ح(□□□□)ว

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Chapter 37: Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

SPOILERS FOR KHR IN BOTTOM NOTES

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The barbeque was good.

Todoroki placed the grilled beef in his mouth and the meat was so tender that it seemed to melt right away. He didn't know how the two women were able to turn normal ingredients from the on sale section of the supermarket into such delicious gourmet food.

At first, he was a bit apprehensive about running into Bakugou here but it looked like Sawada's group was doing their part in keeping Bakugou too busy to kill Midoriya. They gave him food and asked about the hero course like most civilians would.

He thought Sawada's group was rather strange. They were in the same age range but not all of them had similar hobbies and each person had their own styles. Yamamoto and the younger kids obviously ticked off Gokudera but despite the silver haired teen's complaint, he still stuck close to them and even helped Sawada run after Lambo a few times. They didn't seem like people who would normally hang out together but Todoroki brushed it off as him being inadequate in reading social cues. After all, he knew first hand that friendships could form in the most unexpected places.

Overall, the atmosphere had been calm and joyous, even if sometimes one person would mess up or do something dumb like put mentos into soda.

Bakugou was seated beside Kozato Enma, the boy with the red hair. It looked like they were talking to the girl with the curly ponytail and instead of looking pissed off, Bakugou appeared rather calm if not a little bit on the serious side. He called the girl "Adelheid" and if Todoroki was being honest, the girl reminded him a bit of Iida with how strict she was but with more authority.

"I don't believe we would be working in close proximity in the future, but it is nice knowing you." Bakugou was actually being rather friendly with her. At least, Todoroki had never seen Bakugou speaking in such formal terms with people his age. "Glad to see somebody is

still sane around here."

"It should be us who initiated proper introductions sooner. Last time we met was a little rushed but thank you for helping Enma out the other day," Adelheid replied while she sliced a knife into the meat she was preparing. Todoroki hadn't realized it before but she was relatively tall for a girl her age, even though she was only in middle school, she was almost as tall as Bakugou. He was kind of glad Mineta wasn't here because Mineta would definitely do something embarrassing if he saw this girl with a huge bust size.

"And broke our hearts long before that," the guy with a white fedora beside her muttered. He was what Todoroki's father would consider "a player type". The teen had thick square framed glasses that looked more for fashion purposes than for vision correction and he had a small goatee. His orangish hair was combed back while his whole demeanor was chilled, relaxed as if he was boneless.

"Julie," Adelheid warned.

"I'm still in mourning, Adelheid."

The girl huffed out a very quiet "hopeless" before turning her attention back to Bakugou again. She passed the blond some vegetables. "Here, try some of Kaoru's cooking. He's actually not bad when it comes to vegetables."

The tall blond guy by the grill had a mullet and he didn't really look like a middle schooler. Too tall and too beefed up, Todoroki wouldn't be surprised if someone told him this was a newbie for some yakuza gang. At the mention of his name, he lifted his head and nodded curtly at Bakugou.

"I would say sorry on Squalo's behalf but we all know that is bull," Bakugou laughed. It was a genuine laugh, with his normal challenging sharp stings all gone.

They got along well. Todoroki was intrigued. Although everybody got along, excluding the adults he could tell this picnic was divided in different groups. One group gathered around Kozato Enma and the other had Sawada Tsunayoshi as their center. Bakugou wasn't as close with Kozato's group. However, Todoroki didn't think Bakugou acted this friendly at the start of the school year…so what was the difference between this group of strangers and them?

Why was Bakugou being nicer and so much calmer than normal?

Was it because he already knew these kids? Todoroki remembered seeing Kozato at the UA visit, when that teen model came with the TV crew. She was a beautiful girl and he remembered thinking she resembled Bakugou to a certain degree. Or were they actually that similar? He could be just mistaking them because they had similar color schemes and it had been an overwhelming day with too many observers along with flashing cameras.

Bakugou shuffled around. He talked with Mrs. Sawada and then rotated to chat a few minutes with the other middle schoolers.

“How are you enjoying the food?” Sawada Tsunayoshi came up to them, smiling a bit nervously. He seemed to have a twitchy edge to him, just like Midoriya.

“It’s delicious!” Uraraka chirped.

“Yes, we are enjoying it very much. Thank you so much for having us.” Iida was also happy with the food. This whole afternoon had been relaxing so far and they thought about having a barbeque on campus if their teachers would allow it. Todoroki was pretty sure the rest of their class would love it. If they could, Iida wanted to invite Class B too.

“That’s good!” Sawada was relieved. “If you guys want more drinks, there’s some on that table over there, so help yourself. Oh, don’t eat anything Bianchi gives you. Her cooking is a little out of normal people’s range of what can be considered edible.”

Todoroki decided he should be polite and not ask if he meant the black and purple goop that the pink haired girl was attempting to feed to Gokudera. He merely made a mental note to not touch any of that and stay as far away from her as possible.

Speaking of staying away…he glanced at Midoriya, who was still planted in his seat. Todoroki always knew Midoriya was a nice guy. He was always apologizing and sensitive to other people’s feelings, never wanted to be a bother, and had a strong desire to help people. However, even as his friend, Todoroki had noticed a few times where Midoriya could be a bit overbearing, especially when he was too deep in his own world with analyzing quirks.

Todoroki wouldn’t call him weird, just quirky (no pun intended). It was alright since Todoroki was also socially awkward and he didn’t mind Midoriya’s talkative nature. At first he didn’t get why Bakugou had so many problems with Midoriya and attributed it to the blond

simply being an ass for no reason but now…he wasn't so sure anymore.

Still, Midoriya was his friend.

He placed a hand on Midoriya's shoulder and whispered, "We can leave early."

Midoriya turned to face me. "No, it's okay. I'm alright. This food is great and I don't want my mom to be sad."

He did seem relatively alright, *if* Todoroki ignored how intensely he was staring at Bakugou listening to Kozato and Sawada talk about their collective fear of dogs. Sawada had a timid nature and Kozato was a bit on the…gloomy side? Neither were very extroverted but Bakugou looked quite comfortable around them. It was different when he was with Kirishima or the others at school. Here, he actually felt *with* them and not just chuckling along with whatever Bakusquad wanted because he found them tolerable. There was a strange premonition of how if something was to happen, Bakugou would seek them for help instead of asking his classmates and teachers who saw him more often. That they were the ones who Bakugou could truly depend on.

Todoroki found that weird, just ever so slightly because it could be a situation like him and Fuyumi. He would ask his sister for help if he felt too embarrassed to ask his friends.

Midoriya was just watching, he stayed in his seat and talked to his mom about normal things, stuff about school that Todoroki also shared with his mom so for now, Todoroki let him be. "Let us know if you need a breather then."

They just might be able to get through this without any problems.

Todoroki swore he only took his eyes off Midoriya for a brief moment as he helped Midoriya's mom add more coal to her grill. When he looked up, Midoriya was gone and so was Bakugou. He didn't immediately panic because he realized Uraraka wasn't at the table either. There was a text on his phone from Midoriya about how they were going to fetch buckets of water to wash some plates with.

He went to find Iida. "It's been a bit long since they are gone."

There was a public washroom less than a five minutes walk from here.

Iida looked down at his watch. “Yes, I was just about to go check on them.”

They didn’t think Bakugou and Midoriya would clash again so soon but it was better safe than sorry. As they got to the washroom, they saw Bakugou glaring at Midoriya. The blond teen tossed a half filled bucket to the ground and rolled up his sleeves.

“I told you to stay the fuck away from Tsunayoshi.” Bakugou grabbed Midoriya. A deep scowl was on his face. “Now your mom got his mom involved too?”

“I can’t dictate who my mom makes friends with,” Midoriya said. “And we didn’t know you’d be here either.”

“We really didn’t know, Bakugou.” Uraraka was trying to stop them from fighting.

“Yeah, like I’m supposed to believe it’s a coincidence that his mom happened to become buddies with Tsunayoshi’s mom *after* I specifically told him to keep away.” Bakugou shoved Midoriya back and shook his hand in disgust, as if he touched dog fecal matter. “And how I talk to him is none of your business.”

He pointed at the boy behind him. Kozato’s features were scrunched up as if he wasn’t sure what he should do about the tension in the air. He was holding a bucket close to his chest and his lips curved down into a nervous frown.

Midoriya shook his head. “I just think you didn’t need to raise your voice when he spilled the water by accident.”

“Nobody asked for your input.”

“...I *am* pretty clumsy,” Kozato whispered sheepishly. “It’s not that big of a deal. Bakugou-kun didn’t mean any malice telling me to be careful.”

Todoroki was sure he had heard similar things coming from bullied victim’s mouths before when he was in middle school. But Kozato didn’t seem to be forcing his words out past fear, instead he was just a little shy in talking to strangers.

Midoriya caught that too and he glanced between Bakugou and Kozato, seeming confused and trying to understand the situation.

“Are you really okay?” he asked Kozato, green eyes filled with concern. “Kacchan can be pretty overwhelming. You should let him know if he’s being *too much*.”

“ If you got something you want to say about me, just lay it straight and stop beating around the bush with all your crap of how *you’re just concerned*.” Bakugou rolled his eyes. “You’re doing that creepy thing again! He gave you an answer and you’re not happy with it so you keep pressing further.”

“It’s not that. Don’t you see how unfair you treat everybody else around you?” Midoriya waved his hands around frantically. “You treat people like they are your personal servants!”

Kozato was absolutely baffled. “I…I don’t really think I’m being treated as a servant? I mean…I carry stuff around for Adelheid or the other girls too so it’s not a big deal?”

His words came out like a question but it was drowned out by Bakugou and Midoriya shouting over each other about how Bakugou should be a better person or how Midoriya was a creep who couldn’t mind his own business. Another fight looked like it was going to break out between them.

“Midoriya, chill.” Todoroki grabbed the green haired teen back. “Leave them be. Calm down.”

Something was wrong with Midoriya. Todoroki wasn’t sure if this was a panic attack or not but it felt oddly similar. To him, it appeared as if the other teen had been triggered and was reacting badly. Did seeing Bakugou act arrogant around the timid and somewhat depressed looking Kozato remind Midoriya of his difficult middle school days?

Kozato shuffled quietly so that he was in Midoriya’s way of getting to Bakugou, which was a bit surprising considering that he was rather frail and easily spooked.

But Todoroki didn’t have the spare attention to care right now, he needed to get Midoriya to calm down without escalating things further.

A hand reached over his ear and pulled Midoriya further away from where Bakugou was standing. At first, Todoroki thought it was Iida but it turned out to be Sasagawa, the boxer kid that Kirishima always talked to on the phone about manly training.

“I extremely don’t know what is going on but if you want to trade blows, we’re more than happy to entertain.” Sasagawa stepped a bit further away from them. Facing Midoriya, his fists raised beside his head into a boxing stance. “Isn’t that right, Kouyou?”

The green haired teen pushed his glasses up higher on the bridge of his nose. His composure was a bit rigid and he didn’t look like a guy who had ever raised anything heavier than a book but he nodded. “If you keep making Enma uncomfortable, I will not stand by. What is your problem with Bakugou anyways? You’ve been staring at him for the whole picnic and honestly even if he’s not uncomfortable, I am starting to be.”

“He’s a dick who hates me for some reason only god knows,” Bakugou spat. “Little shit thinks it’s fun to mess with me and has his head up his delusional ass. If you really want to be a hero, you shouldn’t be focusing on me, stupid Deku.”

“You are the one who needs to work on your personality if you want to be a *real* hero,” Midoriya yelled as he struggled free from Todoroki’s hold. A darker shade of green swirled in his eyes. “Sometimes I *do* hate you. I hate how you look down on me and it’s really annoying when you keep ignoring me. You are arrogant and you act all high and mighty because you were lucky enough to be born luckier than everybody else.”

“Midoriya?” Iida called after him, startled by the sudden outburst.

But Midoriya wasn’t listening to him. He stomped forward, pushing past Sasagawa with the green electricity of his quirk zapping along his skin. Midoriya glared at Bakugou intensely, as if he was going to engulf the blond whole like a snake ready to swallow its prey.

“I fell into a severe depression in middle school. It was so bad that some days I thought about ending it with a razor, did you know that? Of course you don’t. You don’t care. You never cared about anybody other than yourself and you always looked the other way when the other kids picked on me because you think you’re above everybody else. So yeah, sometimes I think that maybe a beating or failure would finally bring your ego down to size.”

His words had Todoroki’s heart in a choke hold. Of course he knew Midoriya didn’t have it easy with how his quirk developed late and the stigma around quirkless people but his friend never went into such horrid details. Bakugou was Midoriya’s childhood friend and

classmates…maybe Midoriya was hoping Bakugou would notice and help him?

But knowing Bakugou, the chances of that happening was slim.

“I tried to be patient with you. Yet you cry for another man, you feel for a sketchy older guy who treats you terribly when I have been nothing but kind and understanding with you. Why can’t any of your feelings be for me? Be *because* of me? I do everything to help you become a better person and you just shove me away constantly. You say you don’t like me for all my unsophisticated background and appearance but look at who you are hanging out with?” Hurt and jealousy twisted Midoriya’s features and his tears were burned away by the anger accompanying his quirk acting up. “How is Sawada or Kozato any different from how I was back in middle school? Yet you are willing to hang around them with no problems at all. If I was a loser unworthy of your time then what are they?”

He vanished from his spot and Bakugou shoved Kozato to the side, setting off an explosion and Todoroki caught Midoriya’s form moving through the dust and smoke. Black whip shot out, which Bakugou dodged and the blond kicked off against one of the whips, pushing himself up in the air to avoid Midoriya’s full cowl kick.

“Izuku-kun!” Uraraka yelled. “Stop! What are you doing?”

She tried to get to him but Midoriya was moving too fast for her. Todoroki didn’t want to use his fire on his classmate and especially not in a park surrounded by trees yet his ice was too slow. Iida might have a chance but there were too many people in the way. They could understand people being concerned for their friends but Todoroki’s heart nearly jumped out of his chest when he saw Sasagawa trying to intercept Midoriya’s punch. Thankfully Iida pulled him away.

“Please keep yourself safe!” Iida ordered as he tackled the younger boy.

Sasagawa rolled on the ground and screamed back, “I extremely can’t do that when Bakugou is under attack!”

The two of them were locked in a stalemate and Sasagawa was proving harder to contain so Uraraka had to go help. While Kozato was being helped up from the ground by Kouyou. This was such a mess.

Midoriya continued to attack Bakugou, clashing with him and trading

blows.

“You’ve made my life miserable for years! It was living hell just existing and everyday I’d have to watch you live the best dream any kid could ask for but you’re never satisfied. You’re never grateful for what you have and you just–just don’t *get* it! I was fine with it. Maybe that was just how you are even if it made me so mad and frustrated. But then you turn around and just roll over for Xanxus, letting him be dominant over you, letting him touch you, kiss you, and do all sorts of things with you when it should have been me in his place!”

Bakugou kicked him in the stomach, sending Midoriya flying back. “How many times do I have to say I don’t like you for you to finally get it? I’d never date you even if Xanxus wasn’t in the picture!”

Todoroki knew Bakugou was fast and it was more evident when he was fighting Midoriya alone. He was also growing more and more uncomfortable with the words coming out of Midoriya’s mouth. This wasn’t what a crush was supposed to look like, was it? He had seen Natsuo in love or other classmates getting together before and none of that was like this.

This felt too dark, too heavy in a way that reminded Todoroki of mud sticking to his boots after a long walk in the rain. Wet, cold, grimy, and dirty.

Midoriya recovered quickly, green light dancing all over his body as he shot himself forward like a human cannon. This was even faster than his normal limits. “Everything that he can give you I can do it too in a few years! You couldn’t even sit down to talk to me peacefully for five minutes and you’ve already formed an irrational and biased judgment about me. All I get as an explanation is because I am Midoriya Izuku and you won’t even let me at least be friends! That is unreasonable and ridiculous!” He pinned Bakugou to the ground and grabbed the blond by the jaw. “Everything I did and am willing to do for you… you can appreciate any of it. If you get turned on by someone degrading you and treating you like trash, I can do that too.”

Bakugou exploded, both literally and figuratively. “The fuck is wrong with you! Your disgusting fantasies are not my responsibility! I don’t owe you anything!”

The smoke made Todoroki cough and he was simply too shocked by Midoriya’s words that he was tongue tied. Did-Did he really just hear what he heard? Coming from Midoriya’s mouth? Iida and everyone

else was equally shocked and Uraraka's face paled.

"Izuku-kun, you don't mean that…" she started but one glance into Midoriya's eyes and they all knew those were his true thoughts.

"He said I've never taken his thoughts into account but he hasn't done so for other people either! Kacchan only knows how to blitz his way through life and he doesn't care about how many people he hurts or how many hearts he breaks. All I did was try to stop him from hurting others, keep him on the right path since nobody else was brave enough or close enough to do it! It wouldn't be so difficult if he just *listened.*" Midoriya looked feral, or rather, he was so angry that he was panicking to contain himself but failing. The vicious cycle fed itself until he saw red as he glared dangerously at Bakugou. "Why can't you understand how much I care for you? For all you've done to me, all those years of leading me on and holding all of my attention, why am I the one who is expected to just forgive and forget? To watch you happily be another man's bitch?"

"Alright, that's it!" Bakugou pulled out a very long dagger that resembled a giant needle that Todoroki had no idea where he hid it before. "I've had enough of this delusional nonsense! You're going down today and I'm fucking transferring schools tomorrow."

Midoriya's eyes were burning with both hatred and a complicated swirl of emotions that Todoroki couldn't bring himself to label as love.

This was not love.

An obsession.

Todoroki was reminded of how his father looked at the No.1 hero's crown. The same vile fire burned ever so brightly in his father's eyes too. It was envy and greed, an obsession stemming from the darkest of thoughts.

"Stop!" Kozato yelled as he extended his arms and stood in front of Bakugou. His nerves were steeled when he looked into Midoriya's eyes. "I don't really know what's going on but you need to stop! Leave Bakugou alone!"

"Out of the way," Bakugou barked at him. "I'm stabbing that moron today and nothing is stopping me."

"But UA–"

“Screw them!”

Midoriya and Bakugou raced towards each other. Todoroki shot ice out of his arm, hoping to be able to form an ice wall sturdy enough to stop them in time. Just as Bakugou’s dagger and Midoriya’s fist was about to collide, Todoroki saw fire.

It was an orange flame that felt as cold as ice.

Sawada stood between Bakugou and Midoriya, blocking each side with one hand. Instead of the slightly shy kid Todoroki saw at the beginning of the picnic, Sawada’s gaze was calm as he exhaled. There were metal gloves on his hands. Orange, black, and a bit of gold metal allowed him to remain unharmed as he stopped Bakugou’s dagger and Midoriya’s punch. No, wait. How was that possible? Todoroki had experienced Midoriya’s punch first hand in training and that wasn’t something which could be stopped so simply. By an untrained civilian kid too!

Sawada felt like a different person. His eyes were shining bright like the fire burning on his forehead. The younger teen stood up straighter. “Katsuki, please stand down and put your weapon away.”

The nervousness in his voice was all gone too. He spoke in a clear concise tone that commanded attention.

Bakugou clicked his tongue in annoyance but he did back off.

“And now you listen to *him* too?” Midoriya blurted out loud while his words dripped of acid.

Sawada grabbed both of Midoriya’s hands as if they were in a sumo match of pure strength. He pushed the green haired teen back a step.

“Enma,” he called softly.

The red haired teen clenched his fist and before Todoroki knew it, he was on the ground and so was Midoriya. There was an invisible weight on their bodies that pinned them to the dirt. From his angle, he could see Midoriya flying up and slamming into a tree.

Coughing, Midoriya was pinned to the tree trunk by Sawada, who held him up by the throat with one hand.

“Katsuki has not wronged you in any way other than being unable to love you. You will *not* lay a finger on him, am I clear? Not now and

not anytime in the future," Sawada stated in a voice that could freeze deserts. "He doesn't like you. He has Xanxus. There is no law stating people have to love and befriend everybody they meet. He doesn't owe you apologies or any chances simply because you've liked him for a long time or that he didn't help you when you were in trouble. It is not his obligation to take care of you or tend to your feelings because you had it worse. If Katsuki caused you to be depressed simply by existing in the same room as you, then *you* are the problem."

He tossed Midoriya to the floor.

"What did you expect of him anyways?" Sawada tilted his head. He was almost lifeless in a sense and Todoroki felt goosebumps on his skin with how much Sawada reminded him of those cursed puppets in horror movies. "Gokudera said you might be thinking that he should go out on dates with you regardless if he is still with Xanxus, because you're such a nice guy who deserves a chance to prove yourself. I thought that was too dramatic but it looks like he's right. But you're not going to stop at one trial date, you'd demand more, push and push, ask for kisses and more but it would never be enough."

"What do you know about how I feel?" Midoriya coughed and screamed at him. "You're not the one being called 'useless' every single day and teased for not having a quirk or being unable to do anything right? Where everybody thinks you'd never amount to anything and are just naturally less than everybody else because you'll never be enough?"

Black whip shot out, slicing through the air but Sawada grabbed it before it slammed into him. "I do," he whispered and there was no sadness or sorrow in his voice. "I do understand what it is like to be the laughing stock of the class but that doesn't give me the right to attribute all my misfortunes onto someone else who was doing better in life."

Midoriya's eyes widened.

Sawada pulled on black whip, dragging Midoriya forward and Sawada's fist landed on the green haired teen's face. Midoriya hit the ground with a broken nose. Blood dripped down his chin as he held his nose in one hand and groaned. His movements were slow and sluggish compared to a second ago.

"You–Your quirk is not hyper intuition," Midoriya winced.

The tip of a bamboo sword stabbed into the ground right beside his

neck. Yamamoto stood over him, expressionless as he stared down. “You cannot force someone to be with you. If you really do love someone, shouldn’t you want them to be happy and successful? Instead, you sound like you just want *Bakugou Katsuki* the trophy.”

Like a medal people get after passing a stage in a game. Like a prize that kids received after they imputed a coin into a vending machine.

“He’s sick all about control alright,” Gokudera said as he emerged from the bush trail behind Yamamoto. “He sounds like he thinks Bakugou should spend the rest of his life making it up to him and being the perfect submissive lover like he believes Bakugou is for Xanxus. Why? Just because he deserves it so much for growing up with less?”

The disgust in his voice was almost too concrete that Todoroki was so whiplashed at the belated realization that he didn’t even remember to get up after the pressure on him vanished. Midoriya thought Bakugou had everything he wanted in life and his speech inched too close to criminal territory. Todoroki was reminded of the files on stalkers and crazy admirers that his father sometimes allowed him to read. They were the ones who believed a woman owed them sex because their eyes met once while waiting for the green light or people who thought destiny gave them a soul mate because the other person was being polite. The entitlement, the obsession, the envy filled possessiveness… everything was starting to make sense.

What was left unsaid was that Midoriya might also have had urges to hurt Bakugou because he believed Bakugou needed to repent and beg for his forgiveness. It was there, between the lines that Todoroki hadn’t dared thought too hard about but shoved bluntly in his face by Gokudera’s words.

Kozato, the guy probably had a gravity related quirk, stood beside Sawada. Todoroki had no idea why he appeared so timid when he had such a strong quirk. Sawada too…wasn’t he…wait, this would explain how he and Bakugou escaped the League!

Sawada was more than meets the eye.

“If you still want to be a hero, you will *not* harass or touch any of my friends any longer,” Sawada warned. “Or…”

He was stuck on the threat.

“Or we show the world how fucked up you are in the head,” Gokudera

added for him. He moved over and grabbed Midoriya by the hair to lift the latter's head up. "Using your quirk to attack someone who rejected your love confession, repeatedly pestering civilians for personal information, threatening minors with your quirk, and all that good stuff about how you think you're entitled to someone just because you've known them for years. I'm sure the media would eat that shit up and give UA hell. Do they really want a hero who can't take no for an answer?"

A flash of fear morphed into Midoriya's features and tears gathered in his eyes as if he just realized what he had done. He jolted, struggling to get free.

"I-I-I don't know what came over me! I don't really mean it! I just lost it for a moment and I'd never–"

"What are you all doing here? Crowding is not allowed."

Another teen with black hair carrying a pair of tonfas walked towards them. He was…Hibari? The boy who defeated a Nomu without the help of a quirk back during their training camp. Todoroki had heard about him before, long before UA actually. The Hibari family had connections within the police force and Todoroki was sure he had heard of Hibari's name before when scouts from HPSC were chatting about potential recruits when Endeavor took him to visit the president.

"Do you all want to get bitten to death?" Hibari threatened.

"Not the time, Hibari-senpai," Sawada said politely. "We'll get out of the way shortly."

Hibari arched an eyebrow but his eyes landed on Midoriya and then to Bakugou before he nodded.

"Fuck off." Gokudera released Midoriya.

Todoroki got up with Uraraka's help. He wasn't hurt, just a little roughed up from rolling on the ground and so were his other two friends. Midoriya might need a visit to Recovery Girl though.

"Midoriya," Iida's face was green but he still spoke calmly. "We need to take you to Aizawa-sensei and Hound Dog. No objections."

The green haired teen looked down in shame silently, unable to look at anything but his sneakers.

On the other side, the fire on Sawada's forehead disappeared and he lost his courage.

"Bakugou-kun, are you alright?" he carefully questioned. "...Sorry about calling you by your first name back there. Enma, are you and Sasagawa-senpai alright too?"

"We're fine." Kozato nodded. "That was…intense. Bakugou-kun, do you need a moment?"

"No need, I just need to get the paperworks in order to transfer schools. I'm done with that ridiculous fart show."

Todoroki sighed. His brain was a mess and there were so many conflicting thoughts going on in his head right now. Most of them considered Midoriya. He didn't blame Bakugou for wanting to transfer and that might be better since it must be creepy to live right next to someone who has those kinds of thoughts about him. Even just thinking about what Midoriya had implied through his words moments ago made Todoroki uncomfortable and he wasn't even the target.

And the rest was about all the strange inconsistencies he saw in Sawada's group.

Looking at Midoriya, Todoroki knew this was going to be one awkward bus ride back to school.

—---

Bakugou said he was leaving.

"I still don't get what's so wrong with me carrying Bakugou-kun stuff for him," Enma said while scratching his head sheepishly. "It's not like he forced me to do it."

"There's nothing wrong with being a gentleman," Kouyou said in a lighthearted voice. "Well, considering who he is and who he's dating, that's the least he deserves."

It was normal for members of smaller families to do things for the high ranking members of a larger famiglia. Enma might be the Decimo of the Simon family but Bakugou was dating the son of Vongola Ninth. Not to mention, Xanxus was the boss of Varia.

Even Adelheid wouldn't say that being nice to Bakugou was a

degrading or humiliating act for their boss. His status made him deserve that much decency and respect. If this was a formal function with Bakugou attending as Lady Varia, only those deemed to be loyal allies would even be allowed close next to her, let alone be trusted with her purse or even a glass of drinks. That alone would be the highest honor some low rank mafia members would ever receive.

Enma had never been a strict boss either so he was used to carrying a bag for others in his family when they were out. Although Bakugou was a boy and not a Simon, Enma didn't think too much when he was handed the bucket.

Vongola and Simon were friends, and Bakugou was a Vongola in all the meaningful ways possible.

"Forget about it, it's not our problem." Kouyou shrugged. "Let's get out of here before Hibari starts a massacre."

They ran off together immediately.

Tsuna wanted to run too but Hibari was staring at him.

"I-I can explain?" he tried.

"I'm not interested in hero drama." Hibari turned away, which caused Tsuna to sigh in relief.

"Tenth! You did well!" Gokudera smiled as he helped steady Tsuna up on his feet. "That was pretty cool how you showed that hero kid his place."

He might not like Varia or Bakugou but he hated creeps more. Also, Xanxus was more manageable when his mood wasn't soured. Gokudera would like to avoid tomorrow's headline be UA student mysteriously dies off or yada yada yada. Those were just headaches.

"No, it's all thanks to your quick thinking," Tsuna complimented, which made Gokudera really happy.

Yamamoto and Sasagawa laughed. "We should probably go back and check on Mama."

"Ah! You're right! I'd need to ask her to keep away from Mrs. Midoriya too, since, well…" His voice trailed off with the wind. Tsuna's intuition told him not to trust the green haired woman. He just had a bad feeling about all this as he ran with his friends back to

where the picnic was.

He also wondered how he was going to explain anything if the two adult women heard what went down.

Oh god, is there any way I can blame this on Reborn? Tsuna thought grimly.

On the other side of the park, Hibari hit a tree with his tonfas. The tree dispersed like a sandcastle vanishing under the waves. “You’re having too much fun being in other people’s heads, *villain*.”

“Kufufufu…I just tweaked his inhibition a little lower. I didn’t make him say anything he wasn’t already thinking.” Mukuro emerged a bit further away from Hibari. His body looked as if it was made of sand and thousands of particles were collecting to form the human teen. Smiling, he shoved his hands into his pockets. “Such dark thoughts for a hero in training. What a sad world we live in when Vongola Decimo looks more like a shining beacon of hope than a future hero.”

Hibari let out a breath of air that sounded almost like a mocking laugh before he ordered coldly, “Stop stirring a mess in Namimori.”

“What if I refuse?” Mukuro pulled a trident out from thin air. “It was nice playing with the heroes but they do get boring very soon.”

The trees behind him blossomed and sakura petals were flying everywhere. Seeing that, a vein popped along Hibari’s forehead and he smiled sharply while raising his weapons into a fighting stance.

Chapter End Notes

So in case you don't know KHR:

1. Mukuro fought Hibari before. At the time, Hibari had been infected by a disease that caused him to lose motor function when surrounded by sakura. Mukuro created an illusion of sakura and beat up Hibari while he was immobile. Later on, Hibari came to help Tsuna and returned the favour to Mukuro. Thus, they don't get along.

2. Simon Primo and Vongola Primo were best friends (equals to each other) and the Simon family controls earth flames that directly opposes Vongola's sky flames. But the Simon family's influence diminished over the years because of a betrayal so in present day, they are considered a weak family and very few

know about their connection to Vongola. Thus, Enma and Tsuna while being friends, in the mafia world their status are very different (but still tight allies)

Okay, I might have to come back and edit this chap sometime later but it's late where I am so good night!

Chapter 38: Extra - SMUT

Chapter Notes

> PWP. Just smut of Katsuki and Xanxus's first time. I regret nothing. d(･∀･○)

Lighter than a feather, the snow fell from the night sky and blanketed the forest outside of the castle. Katsuki could see the white covering the greenery and collecting at the edge of the dark gray stone windows. He pulled the thick curtains close before tossing himself back on the large pillows he had scattered on the carpet in front of the fireplace.

While the winter winds blew strong outside, the fire danced on the wood, filling the room with a cozy warmth.

Katsuki threw a small piece of flower shaped chocolate into his mouth while flipping to the next page of his book on the ground. He could taste a bit of hazelnut mixed with the rich chocolate and that made him happy.

His mom was doing a whole health craze diet thing this month and he hadn't touched any meat at all in his house. No beans either because they cause gas and his parents couldn't have that happening, even by accident. Sugar was already banned so Katsuki was basically down to vegetables only, since rice and fruits contained too much sugar and calories. Of course his parents had "protein and sugar substitutes" in place but most of that junk tasted like shit.

There was music in the background, slow and low in a soothing rhythm. Katsuki could be here all night, sprawled over the expensive carpets in Xanxus's room and being absorbed in the world of books while lounging around in his pajamas. Katsuki always felt more at ease here. Even though there were still plenty of rules and taboos in the mafia castle, he still felt as if he could breathe a little easier.

For the first time in his life, he was being taken care of and he didn't feel as alone.

Xanxus sat behind him on the couch, postured relaxed as if he owned the whole world. His tie hung loosely around his neck and his suit jacket was discarded on the foot of the couch carelessly. The man was in a rather good mood today though, as evident by how he was letting

Katsuki run around messing up his room and putting on music. Leaning back, Xanxus drank while Katsuki hummed along to the song from the antique record player in the corner.

The man had been unfrozen and was back leading Varia, which Katsuki couldn't be happier about. It was strange but it was as if there was a missing place inside of him that finally filled up, making him whole again.

"You're not getting enough to eat at home again?" Xanxus asked while unbuttoning his shirt. There were scars all over his exposed chest, which Katsuki thought looked rather painful but Xanxus didn't need his pity.

"It's not that I don't get enough to eat." It was more that no matter how many celery sticks he ate, his growing body would keep telling him it wasn't enough. The hunger was in his head even if his stomach was full. He craved fat and proteins; salt, sugar, and spices that would make flavors burst on his tongue…that would be before the guilt settled in or before his mom's angry shrieks came to chide him about how he still had weight to lose. "They're just not what I need."

He could eat a thousand carrots but that didn't replace his body's demand for other more filling nutrients.

"Here, try one." Katsuki climbed onto the man's lap, straddling him. He pressed a piece of chocolate next to Xanxus's mouth. "Come on, open up."

He tried to soften his tone and put a little pur at the end of his pitch, like how he would do it when he was modeling. People loved Victoire when she did that and to be honest, Katsuki loved the control he had over the crowd.

Xanxus took the chocolate and everything about him was perfect in Katsuki's eyes. Of course he knew the man was dangerous and violent but somehow Katsuki didn't feel like he ever wanted to part with him.

Katsuki couldn't remember who initiated that kiss.

Xanxus's lips were heated just like the rest of him and it was nothing like the light pecks he'd seen other kids in his middle school had with each other. It was different from the kisses lovers on screen shared too, without any of the hesitations, softness, or modesty. The kiss contained no gentleness, like a force of nature aiming to overwhelm, it was a claim of dominance.

And Katsuki was being engulfed as their tongues tangled together. Xanxus's hand trailed down his spine to grope his butt, rough fingers sliding past the edge of Katsuki's shorts to caress the soft skin between his thighs. Shivering, Katsuki pulled away to get air in his lungs but the man's hand slipped further, fondling with his balls and a light squeeze made Katsuki squeaked, keeping him in place too. Calluses rubbed against his sensitive skin and he was hard. As his erection was trapped in his boxers, Xanxus pulled his hand out.

"Last chance, scamper out of here now or don't come crying later." Xanxus laughed beside his ear and Katsuki, being the dumb kid unable to back down from a challenge, wrapped his arms around the mafia's neck.

Katsuki knew for sure he started this kiss this time.

They move towards the bed, steps light and in a giddy moment, it felt as if they were dancing. Katsuki's toes brushed by the fur of the carpet as Xanxus spun their positions around and he fell into the bed. Xanxus climbed on top of him, pulling his tie off completely with one hand.

Katsuki felt dizzy. The orange and red embers of the fireplace were replaced by the burning scarlet of Xanxus's eyes. He was staring at a fire burning so bright that it felt as if his bones were going to be melted. It was fire that coursed through the older man's veins along with his anger, but right now, something else was fueling the flames.

His heart pounded against his chest as the air in his lungs was stolen by the sight before him. He knew Xanxus was hot when he was a young kid. It was evident in the way the people looked at him on the street, the passersby were scared of him but also couldn't tear their eyes away. Well trained muscles and a handsome face, the boss of Varia's body was a weapon made for the kill.

He could crack someone's skull in half with his bare hands or incinerate them with his fire as easily as he could pop open a bottle of whiskey.

The sense of danger tingled in Katsuki's spine. If he was smarter or more rational, he would have stopped. It wasn't right to do this. He might be fifteen but he wasn't naive. He knew what sex was and this shouldn't be a thing he could do with a mafia man, let alone one who was much older and whom Katsuki had looked up to.

But he didn't tell Xanxus to stop when the man pulled his shirt and shorts off, leaving him completely naked on the bed. His cheeks

heated from belated embarrassment. The realization that they were actually going to do the *whole* thing made his skin hot and it certainly didn't help when Xanxus started touching him. Fingers coursed over every inch of his skin as if they were marking their territory and Katsuki could feel the man's hot body pressed against his. Katsuki wanted to touch him too but his wrists were ensnared by a larger hand.

"Nitroglycerin, right?" Xanxus gruffed. He pulled Katsuki's hands to the headboard and ordered him to keep them there. Katsuki could feel Xanxus's manhood through his trousers. The shape of it and the heat made him blush, making his spine weak inside his own flesh. A dangerous low growl came from the man's throat and Katsuki spread his legs. Cold lube dripped onto his crotch, causing him to shiver.

Katsuki was aware of how sex between two men worked. He couldn't help but overhear things when he hung close to the mob and it wasn't all glitter in the modeling field either. But he was still nervous when Xanxus reached down.

Xanxus inserted a finger that made Katsuki wince. "Xanxus…"
He wasn't sure what he wanted to ask for. It didn't hurt him so much that he wanted to stop but the feeling of being stretched out down there was so novel and weird that he wanted to squirm away.

"Relax if you don't want to get hurt." Xanxus turned his hand, pushing more lube in. "Next time get yourself prepped."

All of the blond's protests were sealed away by a kiss. Katsuki's toes curled around the bedsheet as his back arched up when more fingers were added. The fingers inside of him pressed against his walls while Xanxus claimed his lips. The kiss trailed down to his neck and turned into bites. Xanxus sucked on his skin, leaving red hickeys on the pale skin. Moaning, Katsuki felt trembles in his legs as he edged closer to orgasm.

The mafia pressed a spot inside of him and Katsuki screamed. His vision blurred with tears and his spine felt numb.

"Not there!" Forgetting about the order he received, Katsuki grabbed Xanxus's wrist, hoping to stop him. "X-Xanxus–no, stop…"

He groaned. The fingers in him rubbed harder, focusing on the spot and even pressed a hard nail into him. Gasping and moaning, Katsuki was crying by the time Xanxus pulled his hand out. His cock was hard but without proper stimulation, all it did was leak precum all over his

abdomen, unable to find release.

But every other part of him felt like mush.

He heard Xanxus chuckling before he was flipped around and his hands were tied to the bedpost by the man's tie. Whimpering, Katsuki knew what was coming next when he felt himself being prepped into position and a hard heat lined up against his backside.

Saliva dripped from his parted lips and his muscles tensed when he was penetrated. The thickness stretched him wide open, reaching a depth that fingers couldn't even begin to compare to.

"Ah…Ah…" Katsuki tried to speak but only whimpers came out. It was so big and all of his senses were focused on the feeling of being taken from behind, on how the cock slowly slid into him. He felt as if all the power had been sapped out of him and a dull pain spread along his nerves. His hole spasmed, clenching tighter instinctively and causing Xanxus to let out a satisfied grunt.

Katsuki realized that lost his virginity to a villain, a nasty one at it too, when Xanxus's crotch was fully pressed against his backside. It was his first time and while he hadn't given it too much thought before, he never imagined it would be with him tied to the bed and spreading his legs for another man.

The worst part was that Katsuki couldn't find it in him to regret it at all.

"Try to not explode the bed," Xanxus rasped right beside his ear. He trusted in and Katsuki's eyes rolled back. Before he could say anything, the man holding him from behind started moving, pulling himself out and slamming back in again. With each trust, Katsuki cried louder, unable to form a coherent thought with how the cock was rubbing against all of his insides. Squishy and sloppy noises filled the air. More lube was poured over his hole and Xanxus's cock as the man coaxed him to relax, saying that he was too tight.

Xanxus fucked him into the sheets. He was rough, or rather, in full control of the tempo for the sex between them. No matter how Katsuki pleaded or wept, he kept the same overwhelming rhythm that made Katsuki's mind blank out. His whole body was weak and if it weren't for Xanxus holding him up, he would have face planted into the pillow. His wrists struggled against the silk tie and he left sweaty handprints on the wood of the bed frame.

Hands cupped his chest, playing with the muscles there and squeezing them. A hint of pain found Katsuki's nipples when Xanxus tugged on them between two fingers, stretching the dark pink little buds of flesh to their limits.

Katsuki groaned and sweat rolled down his forehead. "That hurts…" he whined.

"But you like it." Xanxus rocked against him, savoring how Katsuki made cute noises and tightened up around his member.

He twisted Katsuki's nipple until both sides were red and swollen, so tender that even the slightest puff of air pressing on him caused the blond to cry sweetly. He left kisses on Katsuki's back too, leaving no spot unmarked before grabbing the younger boy by the ankle and picking up the pace of the sex. Xanxus came inside of Katsuki.

More tears streamed down Katsuki's cheeks when he felt himself being filled up by the semen. He could feel the load being released inside of him, how the cum seemed to slick against his walls and pour deeper into him.

"…Condom…" he whispered breathlessly as the tip of his tongue darted out his parted lips.

"Don't have any."

"Jackass," Katsuki spat.

A hand wrapped around Katsuki's dick, keeping a firm hold on him. Xanxus bit him on the ear. "You sure you want to badmouth me when you're like this?"

Realizing what the man wanted to do, Katsuki's eyes widened. "Wait! I'm sorry–Ah!"

Xanxus squeezed him hard and Katsuki's erection went limp. Fluid leaked from his tip, causing a small stain to form on the bed sheet. Katsuki's breath hitched while his voice was stuck in the back of his throat. Tears rolled down his face as he wept from the pain but there was an equally strong electricity exploding up his spine.

He couldn't believe he was getting turned on by this.

"You're horrible," he whined pathetically while his legs gave out under him, gravity pulled him closer against Xanxus and the cock slid

further into him.

A rough laugh that sounded like a bark sounded behind him. They fucked another round before Katsuki's consciousness collapsed into darkness. When he opened his eyes next, he was sleeping naked against Xanxus. There was a stickiness between his legs and his whole body felt sore as he laid in the mafia's embrace.

Xanxus had an arm over him, letting Katsuki use his chest as a pillow while both of them slumbered under the same blanket. It was oddly comforting to hear Xanxus's heartbeat or feel the rise and fall of his chest in such an intimate way.

Looking up, Katsuki saw the Varia boss still sleeping. His eyes were shut tight and the crease between his eyebrows didn't disappear even when he was supposed to be at his most relaxed state. Katsuki pushed himself a bit higher up and planted a kiss on Xanxus's forehead.

A hand grabbed him by the waist and Katsuki cursed out loud when he felt Xanxus's cock slid into him again. His ass was still burning from last night and the leftover cum wasn't enough of a lubricant. He also didn't think he would ever get used to how big Xanxus was as the giant cock stretched his tired hole out again.

"Don't sneak up on me if you're not ready to face consequences," Xanxus said without a care in the world and Katsuki punched him on the chest. The assassin grabbed his wrist, which already had a faint ring of red from being tied up last night, before pushing Katsuki onto his back and fucked him from the front this time. "Damn, you're still too tight."

Xanxus grunted, his expression was still plenty serious but the tension in his muscles were no longer there. He looked focused, sharp crimson gaze entered on Katsuki and for a second there, it seemed like nothing else in the world mattered. The fire behind his eyes burned for Katsuki, ready to consume him whole until neither of them were anything but a pile of ashes.

Allowing Katsuki to wrap his legs around his waist, he fucked Katsuki until the blond was seeing white. Ecstasy coursed in his veins and it made Katsuki feel even better when his brain wrapped around the fact that it was *him* who was making Xanxus feel good too.

"Voi Boss! Get your lazy ass down to the boardroom cause we got a meet–" The door was kicked open and Squalo's loud voice stopped abruptly.

Xanxus stopped moving and Katsuki's shameless moan was stuck in his throat. The musk of sex was still heavy in the air as Sqaulo walked in.

"The hell?" Squalo choked his confusion out, eyes wide with shock and speechless horror. Katsuki wanted to combust right on the spot. Xanxus tossed the night lamp at Squalo, who dodged it instinctively. "Porca puttana! What the fuck are you doing?"

"Get out, trash!" Xanxus pulled out from Katsuki, causing a sloppy wet 'pop' to sound in the air and all three of them fell into silence. Without looking ashamed or embarrassed, Xanxus pulled on some pants. "What does it look like we're doing?"

He threw a punch at Squalo. Squalo cursed ever so colorfully in rapid Sicilian before he intercepted the fist aiming for his face. The two men got into a fist fight while Katsuki scrambled to cover himself with a blanket as cum leaked from his ass.

His face was on fire.

Little did he know that it wouldn't be the last time one of Varia's executives caught him and Xanxus in a…*passionate situation.*

Chapter 39: Chapter 36

Chapter Notes

Warning: implied body modification, therapy in session

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

A monitor lit up in the dark basement.

Series of numbers scrolled past the blue screen while the rest of the room came to life. Dozens of monitors turned on one by one, all running different data. Some were numbers and others showed graphs, recalibrating and feeding commands into the countless electrical wires connected to them. Neon fluids mixed with a metallic shine were pumped through thick tubes and fed into the pod at the deepest corner of the room.

Wires and tubes were laid into an intricate web on the ground but Dr. Garaki navigated through them with ease. The chubby and short old man sped past all of the working machines and pressed his face onto the glass wall separating the pod into its separate space.

“Yes! Yes! It’s complete! My masterpiece!” A crazed wide grin twisted his features as the feverish excitement made his neck red and bulging veins crept along the back of his hands as he raised his fists into the air.

On the other side of the glass, the pod started beeping. The glass on the machine opened, allowing all the murky green liquid inside to spill onto the ground, leaking into the lines between the tiles before reaching the drain in the corner. There was red mixed in the chemicals, dark and pink, the red carried a heavy scent of blood and a nasty smell of disinfectants filled the air.

A pale hand reached out from inside the pod and grabbed onto the side of the opened glass. Staggering, a naked Shigaraki coughed, spitting out a mouthful of chemical infused liquid. The rigid muscles on his back spasmed as if they were still being fused onto Shigaraki. Blue veins could be seen under his thin skin and his body was thinner than it should be.

“Welcome back, Tomura.”

All For One's voice came from the speaker above the room.

"Sensei," Shigaraki swallowed. His mouth tasted stale, with a bad taste of tar that stung his tongue. "I was…"

"Game over, yes." All For One hummed lightly as if he was in thought. "But thanks to the Doctor, we were able to pull you back. No matter how many times you fail, Tomura, we will be here to support you to try again."

Shigaraki's memory was hazy, a spinning kind of dizziness as if he had been on a carousel for too long and all of his senses were disoriented. But he remembered a few things, things like how they were ambushed and he was engulfed by fire. He was *dead*. Looking down at his hands, he saw no burn marks on them. He touched his face and the skin there was smooth, bloated and slightly wrinkled even from being submerged in fluid for so long.

"You should take it easy," Dr. Garaki said while probing Shigaraki with a metal stick as if he was testing the durability of Shigaraki's skin. "I am a genius but not god. You will need time to get all your bearing back and some more fine tuning to make sure everything is functioning correctly. We managed to improve your body a lot these past months and I'm sure you will come to love all the adjustments."

The old man rambled on and Shigaraki's head hurt. "Where are the rest?"

"I believe the girl, Toga, is still alive but she is under police custody," All For One said slowly. "She is alive but I'm afraid she won't be of much use in her state. The rest…I'm sure you already know. It was a great loss on our side. We didn't anticipate Vongola would get involved."

"Vongola…" Shigaraki had his fair share of lessons in criminal organizations. Vongola was a name that came up frequently and yes, he remembered the logos on his murderer's uniforms in better details now. The man who killed him used a gun and executed him at close range, just how the mafia liked it. "Varia was the one who attacked us. The brown haired kid, he's one of them."

"Correct. My contacts discovered that the child is the son of Vongola's current external advisor. That would explain why Varia was mobilized as retaliation."

There was something dark in All For One's voice but Shigaraki started

coughing too violently to ponder. He stumbled to the ground, knees hitting the floor with a heavy thud and his left eye felt like it was burning. Howling in pain, he clasped a hand over his eye.

“Rest well, Tomura. You shall have your revenge soon.”

Still screaming in pain through ragged breaths, Shigaraki looked up and saw his own reflection in the glass. His left eye was blood red, unnaturally so as if the veins in his eyeballs had all popped.

And in it, it reflected a single number in kanji.

One.

2

“I want to transfer schools,” Bakugou stated as he handed Aizawa a whole stack of paperwork that was already signed and filled out.

Blinking, Aizawa took a large sip of his black coffee before taking the stack. “This is related to the Midoriya incident?”

“Yes.”

Aizawa sighed heavily. He only asked to be sure but he already knew the answer. Iida had filled him in on the BBQ incident. If he had known Bakugou and Midoriya would run into each other, he wouldn’t have allowed both of them to leave campus at the same time. In hindsight, that was his fault. He should have predicted it was a possibility since Bakugou frequented Namimori.

And now he was scrambling to do damage control.

“For what it is worth, I am sorry that I didn’t take Midoriya’s issue with you as seriously as I should have.” From what Iida told him, Aizawa could only imagine the discomfort Bakugou felt with Midoriya attempting to court him. That was way over the boundaries of a harmless teenage crush. “Midoriya would be thoroughly punished and to be frank, I’d like you to reconsider this application.”

“It’s not really your fault,” Bakugou said after a brief moment of silence. He sat down in the chair Aizawa pulled over for him. “I didn’t know he’d be this freaky about the whole thing either.”

“And how much of your decision is influenced by your boyfriend’s request?” Aizawa didn’t want to call it a *request,* Xanxus made it very

clear that it was an order. As a teacher, he found it alarming for a boyfriend to have control over his student's academic decisions. He had seen people helping each other analyze the financial costs or specific majors and schools, voicing their opinions and such…but never giving direct orders and deciding what the student should do without consulting the person's wish.

Bakugou shrugged. "It's not like Xanxus isn't making sense. Midoriya is not getting it. He doesn't understand 'No'. Or rather, he doesn't want to take it as an answer. Sure, attempting to kiss me was a dick move but it's what he actually thought is the disturbing part. I don't want him to be anywhere near me for the rest of highschool, which is going to be hard if we're on the same campus and in the same class. Sensei, I don't know how I can make it clearer that I will never date him and he should give up."

Valid reasons. Aizawa hadn't seen anyone as stubborn about a crush as Midoriya before. No matter how Bakugou rejected him, that optimistic attitude Midoriya sported was starting to grate on everybody's nerves. Normally Aizawa enjoyed his students having determination but this was not the right way for it to manifest.

He skimmed through the paperwork. It did surprise him slightly to see Bakugou's parents already signed off on the form.

"…I cannot say I understand your relationship with Xanxus. Both as a teacher and as an adult observer, this relationship looks strange to me and I do believe it is exploitative in nature but this is a private matter where legally, my hands are tied. You still have my number in case you need anything," Aizawa sighed heavily. "I cannot approve of this transfer right now as a transfer between hero programs needs the principal's signature. Nedzu might ask to have a meeting with you later about your options."

Bakugou nodded in understanding.

The blond teen got up.

"One more thing," said Aizawa as Bakugou was about to leave. "Is there anything about your homelife that I should be concerned about?"

Bakugou paused in his step. Turning his head around slightly, he smiled. "Nothing that's not already taken care of."

Somehow Aizawa didn't feel at ease with that answer.

For the first time since he figured out about Bakugou's situation, he feared that he might be too late.

3

"Bakugou, are you really transferring schools?"

Kirishima looked like a lost puppy stranded on the side of a highway. Bakugou felt a rare sting on his consciousness as he turned around to meet the red haired teen's watery eyes. Before he could answer, he was dogpiled on by the rest of the Bakugou squad.

"You are going to leave us?" Mina wailed as she wrapped her arms around his waist.

"It's not fair that you have to change schools for something like this!" Kaminari hugged him tight while Kirishima ugly sobbed.

Stumbling, Bakugou managed to stabilize himself at the last minute before all of them toppled over the sofa. "Let go of me you idiots! Soy Sauce Face, come and get them off me!"

Sero sat down beside them. "I am with them on this one. Like, I know you must be freaked out by what Midoriya said but it's very unfair that you are the one who has to change schools."

They were in the common area when Iida and Todoroki basically escorted Midoriya back to campus as if the green haired boy was a prisoner awaiting trial. They took him to Aizawa-sensei. Uraraka's face was green when she explained what Midoriya had done during the barbeque and the whole class got uncomfortable. The feeling was further strengthened when Iida and Todoroki came back first, confirming Uraraka's story and giving them a bit more detail.

Sero didn't know Midoriya was such an…*incel?* That might be the most appropriate term for it? He was no doubt a nice guy and wonderful friend, even though he had a bit of faults, it had never been any problem when they were in class or hung out in groups. Midoriya was always eager to help and so compassionate…he fooled everybody.

Shuddering, Sero felt disgusted by the green haired boy's mentality. The entitlement was so weird and repulsive that he was left speechless along with the rest of his friends. It was a different kind of disgusting from seeing Mineta thirst after girls too. At least Mineta knew he didn't own the girls but Midoriya somehow had it in his head that Bakugou owed him physically intimate romantic affection just because

he existed.

Needless to say, they wanted to have a very stern talk with Midoriya (with very strong words) but Aizawa-sensei had Midoriya under dorm arrest at the teacher's residence. He was allowed homework and Iida was asked to collect some personal items, such as clothing and toiletries, for him. His phone and laptop were confiscated while the teachers discussed what his punishment should be.

He hadn't been allowed back to class yet either and from what Sero heard, Midoriya's mom had been contacted too. Good. Midoriya needed a serious wake up call. It was starting to sound very "rapey" with how Midoriya kept pushing for Bakugou to give him a chance when the blond made it abundantly clear that he couldn't feel the romantic spark with Midoriya. Normally it was admirable to see Midoriya strategizing on how to overcome barriers but it became frightening when said barrier was Bakugou's sexual boundaries. It was coercive, invasive, and intimidating.

Bakugou should be allowed to assert his boundaries, especially when it concerned who was allowed to touch him in places that don't normally see the light of day.

"It's not like I'm going to be gone forever," Bakugou grumbled. "I still answer texts and phone calls."

"But that's not the same!"

"Totally not the same!"

"You go to sleep so early that you miss all the good stuff in the group chats!"

Kirishima got up, looking more serious. "...Bakugou, does this transfer have anything to do with Xanxus?"

He asked the question that all of them were thinking. They all knew what Xanxus said to Bakugou the other day. None of them felt very comfortable to see the scary-looking man order their friend around. It was even more jarring to see Bakugou following through with the order.

Bakugou looked each of them in the eyes before shaking his head slowly. Struggling free, he sat up on the sofa properly. "It's not all about him. I just don't want to deal with Deku any more and it's a pain in the ass to have to worry about his freaky habits. I can't focus

completely if I have to worry about him throwing himself at me."

That would be concerning. Focusing in class would be difficult if there was someone always watching your every move, plotting on how to touch you intimately and even fantasizing about all the dirty stuff too. Having to see Midoriya everyday and even interact with him was not fair for Bakugou.

"Can't the teachers work something out?"

Bakugou looked like he had a sour taste in his mouth. "Moving to class B won't help, we're next door to each other and share training schedules."

They couldn't argue with that. Midnight-sensei did mention they would share more sessions with class B once they move onto second year for more integrated training on specialized lessons.

"What do you see in Xanxus anyways? Besides how hot he is and the money." Mina wrapped her arms around Bakugou's elbow, preventing him from running off.

"Xanxus knows when to back the fuck off when I say no," Katsuki said with a blank face. "He looks and acts like an entitled jackass most of the time but he hears me. And stop it with the long faces, I don't even know if my transfer papers would get approved."

"What happens if it doesn't?" Kaminari asked.

"I'd probably pull out of UA and go to Italy then. They have hero programs there too."

It didn't look like Bakugou was too keen on that idea himself.

Kirishima gawked. "Italy?"

"That's so far away and a whole different timezone!" Kaminari's eyes were bulging out of his sockets.

Bakugou pushed all of them off and stood up. "Anyways, nothing is decided yet and we've still got an English test tomorrow. You four need to go to sleep or keep preparing for it."

He went up the stairs, leaving Kirishima and the rest of them to glance at each other, not knowing what to do. A part of them were scared of the test they weren't fully prepared for and they were also sad about

their friend possibly having to leave UA or even the country.

This didn't feel fair.

Sighing, Kirishima packed up his books on the coffee table. "Maybe we can talk to Aizawa-sensei about it."

"What can he do? The only way to really keep Midoriya away from Bakugou is if one of them transferred classes or schools," Sero reminded. "It's not right if one of them has to sit out of a class or be forced to interact with each other."

Mina stretched her legs out and yawned. "And we can't really stop Bakugou from changing schools. That's with his parents and the school. We'll have to see what the teachers decided then."

They were just his friends and of course they wanted Bakugou to be happy and not be harassed. If that meant Bakugou changing schools, they would just have to find a way to accommodate and accept it.

"We will pester him non-stop in the group chat then if it's the worst case scenario." Kaminari pouted and he walked over to the counter by the kitchen. His phone chimed and he looked down instinctively. A small sound of confusion rolled off his tongue as he tried to turn the notification off.

The speakers on his phone automatically came on.

"Sometimes I do hate you."

Midoriya's voice resonated within the common room and Kaminari was so shocked that he forgot to press stop on the video. Along with the rest of his friends, they listened in stupor as the green haired boy's speech filled their ears. They knew what Midoriya did at the park but nothing was like seeing it actually happening with their own senses.

And the content of Midoriya's speech was nothing short of chilling.

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"Mom, are you still going to cooking classes with Aunty Midoriya?" Tsuna asked as he helped his mom clear the breakfast table.

"Oh no, I don't think she wants to speak to me anymore," Nana answered with a bit of confusion and sadness in her voice. "Not since you got into an argument with her boy the other day. She is still mad

about him tripping and breaking his nose. How unreasonable it is to blame her son's clumsiness on you. Is that what people call 'helicopter parents' these days? It's quite scary. And then she had the audacity to yell at me for not teaching you better! She's just unreasonable!"

Tsuna laughed dryly. "...Um, yeah. Totally."

Midoriya had told their parents that he tripped. Tsuna backed that story up in front of the two women and thankfully, his mom fully believed anything he said (with a little help of a commentary distraction from Reborn, of course). Aunty Midoriya, however, called bull shit and she was completely baffled by Nana questioning her innocently about how Tsuna could have hurt her child. In her mind, Tsuna was the boy who would trip over his own feet, there was no way he could ever hurt a hero-in-training.

"You know, when I heard he tripped, I thought you'd have tripped after him too. What are you boys doing setting off firecrackers in broad daylight? It's loud and might disturb the neighbors." Patting Tsuna on the head, Nana smiled. "It's good that your reflexes seem to be getting better. If it was before, I'd have to get the first aid kit ready. I got the robot band-aids you love."

"Mom! Don't say that out loud!" Tsuna backed away from her as a blush made it onto his face. "I'm going to do some homework at Yamamoto's!"

The brown haired teen grabbed his bag and raced out the door. Still smiling, Nana hummed her favorite tune as she turned to the picture of her husband.

"Our boy is growing up so fast."

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Hound Dog's office was suddenly as terrifying as accidentally falling into an unfed lion's cage during feeding time.

Midoriya wasn't scared of the pro hero for his physical mutations and he had already been speaking with the teacher on a weekly basis but…this time it was different. He felt his nerves rattling as he sat in the room with its comfortable blue couch with a cup of hot chocolate in his hands. The sweet aroma didn't help much to calm him but it was better to keep his hands occupied.

His heart was thudding in his chest but the tips of his fingers felt

shaky and cold, despite the cup of warm liquid he was holding. Midoriya tried to count the tiles on the floor but he kept losing focus when he got to 42. The ceiling fan was not on but he felt as if he could hear it whirring.

It felt like the first time he set foot in the counseling room all over again.

Therapy had been a foreign concept for Midoriya. He wasn't really sure what he should talk about and when he did talk, he often went on rants that he knew put people off. At first he thought Hound Dog-sensei would want to help fix that part of him but the teacher told him that wasn't really a big issue. After the first session of simple introductions and some housekeeping rules, he taught Midoriya some techniques about how to remind himself that he was doing his mumbling rants again and to keep a record of the frequencies. It was pretty common for people to talk to themselves, Midoriya just needed to work on not becoming too overbearing on others when he did so. Then they could work on controlling the timing of his rants so he wasn't doing it at inappropriate times.

Hound Dog-sensei was indeed very supportive and although he started asking more personal questions as the numbers of their sessions increased, Midoriya still didn't find him scary.

He was still a bit self-conscious though, scared that he might upset or trouble Hound Dog-sensei with his problems. It was irrational when the man made it so clear that he was here to help but Midoriya was embarrassed to convey his own feelings. Some of his thoughts didn't feel appropriate to be spoken out loud and he wasn't comfortable talking to others about any sexual stuff, even if some of his dreams troubled him at night.

Hound Dog was a general school counselor but he had connections to the mental health field and he recommended another specialist to meet with Midoriya after the incident in the dorm kitchen with Katsuki. It wasn't for his crush on Kacchan though, Dr. Jefferson was a quirkless man in his fifties who was really understanding and could relate to Midoriya's troubles of growing up being bullied.

"It was why I entered this profession three decades ago," he said with a smile on their first session. Dr. Jefferson was from England and he dressed like an Oxford professor too. He was always smiling, with a round pair of thick glasses and neatly combed gray hair. He was in Japan for an academic meeting, where he met his wife and decided to

move to Japan.

Together, Dr. Jefferson and Hound Dog-sensei were helping Midoriya tackle his social anxiety issues and to work on his compulsive need to defend the underdogs in reckless ways. They had not discussed Katsuki in detail yet since Midoriya wasn't fully ready. While he might have gotten a worksheet or two on the topic of love and affection, Katsuki remained as a topic that they had yet to deep dive into.

Midoriya always knew anything related to Katsuki was not going to be an easy subject for him.

And Midoriya was especially nervous today because he knew he was in trouble. He didn't know what came over him when he had his outburst the other day. It was as if all of his self-inhibitions and restraints just…*snapped.*

Aizawa-sensei had him separated out of 1-A's dorm and confiscated his technology. Midoriya was allowed to call his mom on the landline and here they were, his mom by his side in Hound Dog's private guidance office.

Three men walked into the room. One was Dr. Jefferson, who wasn't smiling and the other was Hound Dog-sensei. Aizawa-sensei came in last and he closed the door. "We're sorry for calling you out of the blue, Midoriya-san."

He was addressing Midoriya's mother and Midoriya saw his mom nodded. "I'm just glad that Izuku isn't hurt in any way. Can I ask what this is about? You were a bit…unclear on the phone."

The three men each took a spot across from Midoriya and his mom. Aizawa-sensei sat in the middle and he sighed. "As you know, the school and Dr. Jefferson has been working closely with Midoriya to make sure he has all the support he needs regarding his mental health. However, we were advised of an incident between Midoriya and Bakugou that occurred at the barbeque party you were also a part of."

Midoriya's mom sighed in relief. "Yes, I didn't think such a thing could happen either. It's terrifying to imagine how Katsuki could have incited someone else to attack my Izuku."

Hound-Dog-sensei's nose twitched.

Tightening his fists, Midoriya looked up at his mom with a pleading look. "Mom, that's not what happened. I told you I tripped so can we please let it go?"

"That Sawada boy punched you unprompted! Shouldn't that be counted as aggravated assault or something? Yet his mom–I can't believe she actually believed her son is an angel who could do no wrong–she believed every lie he spewed!" His mother wasn't having it. "Izuku, I have failed to protect you before but I will not stand by and continue to watch as others trample over you. I know you have feelings for Katsuki but he is simply too coldhearted and your teachers need to know what kind of person he is. Isn't prompting others to act violently against people also a crime? How can we let someone like that be a hero? Katsuki needs to understand that his actions have consequences. I was talking to a few lawyers and they said that if we have enough proof, we would have an abetting assault or inciting violence case."

"But Mom–"

"If I can interject, we are actually not going to punish Bakugou for this. After reviewing certain evidence and hearing witness accounts, it was concluded that Sawada's actions were not unprompted. In fact, it was reactive to what Midoriya did and said. The same could be said about Bakugou's use of his quirk in the park." Aizawa-sensei's eyes landed on Midoriya. His gaze was hard this time, full of disappointment that made Midoriya lowered his head in shame.

"What do you mean? He used his quirk to fight Izuku in public, off campus."

Aizawa nodded calmly. "Yes, in response to Midoriya, with his quirk activated, attacking Bakugou first. We have it on tape."

His mom gasped, eyes wide with disbelief before she steeled her nerves and narrowed her eyes in scrutiny. "Do you have audio as well? Maybe Katsuki said something to upset Izuku again."

"We can show you the feed in a bit," Hound Dog-sensei tried to calm her down. "Dr. Jefferson?"

"I believe it is time we address your problem with Bakugou, Midoriya. It will help make things clearer for your mother." Dr. Jefferson started writing in his notes. "Now, I'm sure you still remember what you said at the park so we will jump right into it. Over the course of your confession to him, you have repeatedly mentioned wanting him to be better. Can you please elaborate on that?"

"I'm not sure how I can elaborate on that?" Midoriya swallowed his desire to squirm in his seat. "I just wanted him to be happy and be better…so be nicer and more polite to people I guess? To not treat everybody like extras

or see them as invisible wallflowers."

"You feel invisible next to him?"

"Yes."

"And how exactly would you like for him to be nicer to people? Is there a specific behavior pattern of his you wish he could change?"

Biting his lips, Midoriya took a deep breath before answering, "Yes, he's too loud and aggressive when presenting himself. I think he should scowl less and he shouldn't be cursing. It would be better if he can respond politely with a smile when prompted and acknowledge people when they address him. When he's not yelling insults, he simply doesn't care…but I know he can care and can soften down for civilized conversations. He just doesn't think anybody is worth his efforts. I just wanted to help him realize that if he was nicer, people would like him more."

"You just said he can act civilized, have you observed him doing so with others?"

Frowning slightly at the meticulous details of the doctor's questions, Midoriya still nodded. "He acts very nice around certain people, like Xanxus. He can behave but just doesn't want to do it for anybody else, which is really wrong since Xanxus is totally abusing him and treating him like The Help." Midoriya couldn't bring himself to call Xanxus Kacchan's boyfriend. That man didn't deserve it.

If Kacchan was serving Midoriya breakfast, he would make sure to kiss the blond and show his gratitude for the meal.

"Xanxus is…?"

"Bakugou's boyfriend," Aizawa-sensei answered for Midoriya, which Dr. Jefferson nodded in understanding in response.

"Are there other people that Bakugou is nice to?"

Hesitating, a part of Midoriya pondered how he should refer to Sawada's group. Were they Kacchan's friends? Didn't really feel like it though. Squalo and Bel were even stranger cases.

"I will take that as a yes," said Dr. Jefferson as he ticked off more things in his notes. "How does seeing Bakugou interact with them make you feel?"

"Angry," Midoriya admitted with a bit of shame. "I don't know what I am

doing wrong that Kacchan won't treat me or my other classmates the same. He is always biased and hostile towards me but I'm the only one who is worried about him."

The doctor made a sound of acknowledgement before training his eyes on Midoriya. "So you were trying to protect him and to help him?"

"Of course, I just want to help him become his best self. Nobody ever tried to correct his problematic behaviors and he often did risky things. Kacchan has issues relying on people or asking for help even when he is in serious trouble too. I was just looking out for him before his pride hurt him."

Nobody in Sawada's group was questioning why Bakugou was dating an older man or even found it strange that he was cursing like a sailor all the time. They don't point out Bakugou's flaws or call him out on all his mean habits, and kids like Kozato were getting shoved around by the blond needlessly.

That wasn't right.

Nobody deserves to be treated like trash.

Maybe that was why he snapped so badly back at the park. Seeing Kozato being bossed around by Kacchan reminded him too much of his middle school bullies. Midoriya vividly remembered the boys harassing him and making him do their share of cleaning or forcing him to run to the vending machines to get them drinks between breaks.

"Can you please elaborate on how you intend to correct those behaviors that you deem inappropriate?"

"I tell him he shouldn't be doing that." Midoriya went on to explain how he used to defend other kids from Katsuki when they were young. He was the only one willing to stick up to Kacchan and he simply couldn't just force himself to look the other way. "I told him he should share his candies in elementary school and how he shouldn't ignore our classmates in middle school. But he doesn't listen. He never listens."

"And when he doesn't obey your requests, what do you plan on doing? Or have thought of doing?"

"Wait," his mother said in a cold voice. "What are you doing? This is starting to feel like an interrogation. Why are you asking such irrelevant questions when we should be talking about how Izuku was injured because of Katsuki?"

Dr. Jefferson's gaze didn't falter. Calmly, he took a sip of water and set down his notes in his lap. "Midoriya-san, I am afraid these are all very relevant questions since the incident was sparked because of the relationship issues between your son and Bakugou Katsuki. If we do not ask Midoriya how he feels about situations involving Bakugou, we cannot properly determine the root of the problem."

"The root of the problem is that some other kid punched Izuku on his behalf," the woman retorted. "Izuku made love confessions. That is not illegal and I can completely understand that Katsuki has a right to reject him. What he has no right to do, however, is to physically assault Izuku over it let alone allow others to do so for him."

"Midoriya has not been able to accept Bakugou's rejection," Hound Dog-sensei pointed out with a bit of disapproval in his voice. "We have received complaints from other students noting that Midoriya has been harassing Bakugou over it."

"He hasn't tried anything inappropriate after the first rejection. How can you call yourself a pro hero if you equate being nice and using his words to a sucker punch in the face? No amount of verbal 'harassment' as you put it should justify physical violence."

"I do not condone uncalled for violence either," Aizawa-sensei agreed with her but he also shook his head. "In this case, we have a more urgent issue to address which requires Midoriya answering Dr. Jefferson's questions. Midoriya, if you will please do so?"

"I…don't really know." Setting the already cold hot chocolate down, Midoriya's mind scrambled to think of how he should answer. "I-I guess I would go find a teacher if he really is acting out of line? I'd probably jump in and stop him too. It doesn't get to that point often though, he usually just throw mean words around."

That was what he was doing for his whole life. He would see Katsuki taking it too far and he had to jump in because no one else would. Midoriya had tried to provide Katsuki all the chances to redeem himself but the blond was squandering all of it. These questions were making Midoriya uncomfortable too because on top of the fear that he was in trouble for using his quirk in public in a fight, he also didn't want to say anything that might destroy Kacchan's chances of being a hero.

Being a hero was Katsuki's dream. Midoriya didn't want to ruin that for the blond.

While it was true that UA wasn't the only hero school in Japan, Midoriya

didn't think Katsuki would be willing to actually transfer. What hero program would take a kid transferring out of UA in the middle of the school year for no apparent reason? People would think there was something wrong with Kacchan and they would be right.

"By stopping him, do you mean to involve punishments of physical threats?"

"I wouldn't call them physical threats. Kacchan…when he's angry his quirk acts up so anybody trying to get close has to be prepared to take a hit. Sometimes he would only stop with a slap or two." That was what Aunty Mitsuki did whenever Kacchan had a tantrum when they were little. She would smack him a few times and he would quiet down.

Kacchan didn't learn by words. He was like a stray animal that needed pain to stay in line.

"What makes you believe you have the right to correct Bakgou's behaviors? As I understand it, you are not his parents and often not the one he is addressing with derogatory terms."

For a second, Midoriya wanted to vomit. Dr. Jefferson's voice was direct but never insulting. He was more serious than during their other sessions but he never showed any hostility or negative emotions towards Midoriya either. However, the teen couldn't help but feel that Dr. Jefferson was setting a trap for him.

"Nobody should be treated like that," he answered quietly. "Nobody deserves to be seen as less just because they are not as naturally gifted."

"Not even when the terms are used as jokes between friends? I have been used as an analogy to a grumpy old dog before by one of my friends, do you feel that is verbal abuse as well?"

"That's different. He doesn't see them as friends." The answer came out too flat, filled with too much venom than Midoriya intended. "He doesn't see anyone as friends. Even as a kid, he was always violent and angry, completely disregarding anybody around him."

A short period of silence followed and the three men glanced at each other, sharing a silent conversation amongst themselves.

"Bakugou sounds like a very nasty and unsociable person according to you, Midoriya." Dr. Jefferson wasn't writing in his notes any longer. Was that a bad or a good thing? "Why do you like him if he was truly so horrible to you and everybody else?"

Midoriya was kind of relieved. He was expecting harder questions about what he said in the park but this wasn't so bad. It was a question that he had asked himself repeatedly after he first started having wet dreams about the blond.

"Kacchan is very beautiful, he is strong and fit but also super agile. He is just amazing in all aspects outside of how he carries himself. He can speak eight languages and counting, he cooks wonderful meals, and he is really good with cleaning. He is smart and he has a lot of super cute habits." Midoriya stopped, remembering the trick of when to remind himself that he was rambling. "I guess it boils down to the fact that I just really admire him…even if he is full of rough edges. He wasn't mean all the time either."

There were occasions where Bakugou was nice to the class as a whole, such as giving them his leftovers when he clearly cooked the portions in anticipation of letting everybody have their fill or when he would chuckle a bit at the back of the room on movie nights. He was softer, easier to be around and more mellowed out. That was the Kacchan Midoriya wished was around more often.

"I see, that is all the questions from me for now then." Dr. Jefferson nodded and he leaned forward slightly in his seat. Looking at Midoriya's mother and then back to Midoriya, his voice turned stern with no room for debates. "I wish there were easier ways to say this but you have a problem, young man. You have an unhealthy obsession with the individual named Bakugou Katsuki. On top of feeling a compulsive need to have other people act according to how you perceive they should behave, you have a completely warped perspective on love. It is a good thing we caught this while you are still young."

"What do you mean by that? I do love Kacchan." Midoriya was stunned. He did love Kacchan. He wanted to make the blond laugh and hold hands with him. They could share hugs and food, whispering to each other about the stupidest of things under the comforts of thick blankets while the TV played in the background. He had the desire to kiss Katsuki too…so how could it not be love?

"Midoriya, do you realize that when you talk about Bakugou, you always refer to the things he should be doing? Most of those things, such as cooking and cleaning, are acts of service which you want him to perform for you. Your view of him is centered on his appearance and how he can take care of and cater to your needs. Any characteristics relating to his intelligence is secondary, almost as if it is a mere bonus decoration of added value. You have built a dream of how a relationship between you and him would look, which is prompting you to feel angered by him when

he is not being as 'perfect' as he is inside your head." Hound Dog-sensei was blunt when he laid everything out. Midoriya felt as if a bucket of cold water was poured down over his head. "Although you claim to love him, you have not respected his wishes in the slightest and, unconsciously, continue to look for loopholes where you can probe and push his boundaries."

"He is doing those things for Xanxus though." And Kacchan clearly enjoyed it when he so happily complied with all of Xanxus's wishes. "And I didn't do anything to him, all I did was talked to him."

"Xanxus is his boyfriend."

"A cunning and exploitative one who is abusing Kacchan."

"Bakugou has not made any accusations along those lines."

"Victims of domestic abuse can't be trusted to make rational decisions. Aizawa-sensei showed us cases where the victims are so brainwashed they always run back to their abusers."

"That wasn't the full intent of my class," Aizawa-sensei sighed, exhaustion weighing into his voice. "I will admit relationships with one more dominant and one more submissive partner can function and be healthy but that is only when both parties are consenting. Even if Bakugou is willing to date you, every relationship is different and you cannot force someone into a role simply because they had a specific dynamic with their previous partner. Can't you see that you are simply inserting yourself in Xanxus's place? Bakugou is not a doll that does whatever command his boyfriend inputs into him."

"If I may, I believe before Midoriya is ready for a romantic commitment, we should look further into his other issues." Dr. Jefferson placed a hand on Aizawa-sensei's shoulder to stop him from a lecture before turning his attention to Midoriya. "You clearly have unresolved issues due to your childhood and all the discrimination you faced growing up. None of us are here to belittle your experiences or tell you to get over your feelings right this instant. I believe you did love Bakugou but the simple admiration got twisted as you grew older. He has everything you ever wanted in life and your insecurities along with his rejection of friendship turned into jealousy."

"I am confused by all of this," Midoriya's mom stopped all of them from continuing. She frowned and looked between the doctor and her son. "What are you trying to get to?"

“I believe your son suffers from depression with a high emphasis on low self-esteem and OCD, the problem then has been compounded by the possibility that he might also be on the autism spectrum. Being determined and hyper focused are good qualities but over a certain threshold, it becomes an obsession that is detrimental to his quality of life.”

“Are you trying to say my son is a retard who doesn’t deserve love?” Midoriya Inko shrieked in anger and horror. Her high pitched voice made Midoriya flinch slightly. He has never seen his mom act this way before. She was always gentle and she had never spoken any harsh words. He didn’t know she had it in her to be this assertive.

“No, that is not what I am saying. I am saying that he is exhibiting symptoms; his compulsive thinking of how things and people should be, his need to correct them at inappropriate times, his continuous invasion of another person’s personal space, and the logical fallacies he used to defend his actions…this is on top of his general anxiety and self-esteem issues and all of these things are impacting his life negatively right now. As you’ve seen how other people have reacted to him lately.”

His classmates and friends had been politer with him and a bit more distant lately. They still tried to invite him to do stuff together and were nice to him but Midoriya had felt their disapproval of how he approached Kacchan. Was the Doctor telling the truth? Maybe.

Maybe he really was sick in the head and that was why people steered clear of him and why Katsuki didn’t like him. Was the real him really that unlovable?

The heavy question sank into Midoriya’s heart. He was familiar with this feeling, it was the same depression that made him dread waking up all through middle school. It was a pair of shackles and binded his feet down and chains that choked him whenever he attempted to be better.

“As I was saying,” Dr. Jefferson continued, “He is jealous of Bakugou’s achievements. This feeling was further blown out of proportion when he realizes Bakugou is able to form intimate relationships with others and you found a new target to direct his jealousy towards. He feels threatened by Bakugou’s boyfriend and like all victims, believes their tormentors should be held responsible. It’s just that in this case, he views Bakugou as the primary cause of his grief and wants him to make it up to him through dating with a relationship dynamic that places most of the power in your son’s hands. This is more about control and revenge than it is about love.”

Aizawa-sensei leaned back in his seat. “Which is highly illogical and a play

of victimization in his own head. Not because we are going to pretend that he didn't suffer any maltreatments but because as far as our investigation shows, Bakugou has not participated in bullying Midoriya at all. Thus, Midoriya might be a victim of systemic bigotry and discrimination but he is not a victim of Bakugou's."

Midoriya wanted to say something but he suddenly wasn't sure how to string his words together. Kacchan was not his friend so he wasn't responsible for him. Midoriya could understand that. His bullies were the boys and girls in his old class laughing at him mockingly but they didn't have a face in his memory. All he remembered from those days were the feeling of how his heart bled with every slur thrown his way and Kacchan's cold stares.

That was the most painful of them all.

"Bakugou Katsuki ignored everything that was happening to Izuku when he was more than capable to help," his mom stated in a hiss.

"It is not another child's responsibility to intervene with bullying," Aizawa–sensei answered without missing a beat. "Why is protecting the safety and happiness of your son another boy's job? He is a student, a peer of Midoriya's of equal standing who has his life and his studies to maintain. Why is it his responsibility to ensure every kid in his class plays nice with Midoriya?"

"I–"

"And since we are on the topic, according to Midoriya, you are close friends with Bakugou's mother. If that is the case, you must know about Bakugou's extracurricular schedules." The pro hero placed a sheet of paper on the table. It was filled to the brim with different language classes and training for the full seven days in a week. "Please tell me with a schedule like this, how was a child supposed to act as a bodyguard or entertaining playmate for others?"

Midoriya Inko was stunned for a second before her expression darkened. "That doesn't apply with most of the bullying occuring in school. He has breaks during class. If he had spoken up about Izuku's situation, more people would have taken it seriously and done something."

Aizawa-sensei looked at Midoriya expectedly. "Is that what you think as well, Midoriya? That Bakugou should drop everything and run to you everytime you need him?"

"...No. That is what I would have done for him if the situation was

reversed."

"Midoriya-san, you seem to have strong opinions about Bakugou," Hound Dog-sensei changed the focus slightly.

"I cannot say I am supportive of Izuku's love for the boy who had done nothing but hurt him continuously. He could have handled the situation with Izuku better than to go straight for violence," admitted his mom. With a hand over Midoriya's hand, she squeezed him lightly in the everything-will-be-alright fashion. "But Izuku's happiness is more important than my feelings towards Katsuki."

"How do you think Bakugou should have handled Midoriya's love confession then?"

His mom gave it a thought before answering, "For starters, he could have declined Izuku's advance politely. He didn't have to trash over Izuku's feelings and call him names, disparaging his efforts and courage. Something along the lines of 'You are a wonderful person but I am already committed in a relationship' would have worked. It is not that hard to think of one positive thing to say about a classmate before letting them down."

"And when Midoriya has not accepted his initial rejection, what is Bakugou to do then?"

"He could have gone out with Izuku for a cup of coffee. Fifteen minutes tops and nothing serious, where he explains why he is unable to date Izuku in more detail. Izuku is not a violent boy and Katsuki knows about his issues of being stubborn and grasping social cues slower. If he was a little patient with Izuku, they could have worked this out in a very civilized manner."

Hound Dog-sensei opened a laptop and turned the screen towards Midoriya and his mom. "Please take a look at this then."

The incident at the park played on his laptop. It showed how Midoriya attacked Katsuki while screaming about how wrong it was that Katsuki wasn't able to love him, how he desired to touch the blond in ways that Xanxus did and all the dark stuff that the green haired teen had kept repressed for years.

All of his most horrid thoughts were laid out under the sun.

"To watch you happily be another man's bitch!"

His voice came out more as a shout than a question. Midoriya cowered

slightly when the video ended at the end of that sentence and Hound Dog-sensei closed his laptop. This was his mom's first time seeing what really went down and her expression was stuck on a mixture of shock and disbelief.

Aizawa-sensei coughed to get everyone's attention. "Is this your definition of not violent? Also, Midoriya has expressed inappropriate fantasies about intimate and sexual themed things he wanted to do to Bakugou. If this was you, would you be willing to go out for a friendly coffee alone with a man who continues to convey these kinds of thoughts about you?"

"I–My Izuku–" She was tongue tied.

"I would recommend counseling sessions for you as well, Ma'am. Perhaps family counseling should be added to the list," Dr. Jefferson added. "It seems you have been enabling Midoriya's warped sense of entitlement over Bakugou's autonomy. Bakugou doesn't dictate how other people feel about your son or how Midoriya feels on the inside. He is entitled to his own preferences and he is not obliged to date every single person who would feel sad if he didn't go out with them. That is not providing chances and being kind, that is shaming him into removing all his boundaries for another person's gratification."

Midoriya fell silent. Sawada said the same thing. That this was his problem.

There was a knock on the door and Principal Nezu came in. "Good day, Midoriya and Midoriya-san. My apologies for not being present for the whole meeting. Now, I'm sure the gentleman here has gone over everything with you so let us discuss the consequences."

The rat of a principal smiled, sending a shiver down Midoriya's spine.

4

"We got one thing over with."

Aizawa sighed heavily as he sat down across from Nedzu. "I am surprised you are willing to dish out such a heavy punishment."

Glancing over to his left at All Might, who had a grim expression, Aizawa made an attempt to sit up a bit straighter. The principal's office was darker than normal with the curtains shut but there was still enough light to give him a clear view. Everything appeared normal, except that Nedzu had the files of four students laid out.

From the left to the right, they were; Bakugou Katsuki, Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku, and Mineta Minoru.

Nedzu offered them both tea and neither man rejected it. The scent of freshly brewed Earl Grey was good for relaxing their nerves.

"I didn't think you would move Young Midoriya out of the hero course," All Might said after finishing half of his tea in one gulp. It was inevitable really since Nedzu's teacups looked like toys in the man's giant hands. "Moving him to 1-C and letting Young Shinsou take his place in class A… that is a very severe punishment."

"He will have his chance to earn his spot back when he shows progress of fully understanding the issue of consent," Nedzu replied easily. "You've seen the tape too. Even if I am not the principal, as a reasonable educator I simply cannot allow a student to have to interact with someone who had expressed unwanted and inappropriate sexual desires towards them on a daily basis, especially not with the current dorm system."

Midoriya and Bakugou lived too closely together. That was a window of opportunities for bad things to happen and they had to nip any potential dangers in the bud.

Nodding, All Might looked down at his tea. "I had hoped it was a misunderstanding. Young Midoriya didn't exhibit such a dangerous tendency when I first met him."

"People like them often have this dark side hidden well. They are consumed in their own twisted logics and often find themselves in an echo chamber that only strengthens their delusional beliefs," Aizawa said. "It is not too late to correct him and give him help. His mother on the other hand, I don't know if she can realize her faults."

Nobody wanted Midoriya to change who he was as a person but he did need to lose the entitlement and anger over not getting his way. Bakugou shouldn't be expected to have to provide him with attention and love simply because Midoriya felt like he deserved it. While Aizawa would agree that Bakugou's attitude could be toned down a few notches, Midoriya had no right to be the one to decide what was appropriate or how Bakugou should be punished for speaking out.

It would be impossible for the school to obtain temporary guardianship over Midoriya since his mom did love him dearly. She cared for him deeply but she only enabled his delusions further, feeding into his fantasies of how he was not in the wrong.

“And the therapy sessions with Dr. Jefferson are to continue?” All Might asked.

“Of course, with added lectures from Hound Dog so they could tackle each of his other problems and traumas too. We are punishing him for his inappropriate actions but that doesn’t mean we are giving up on a student and leaving them to rot.”

“I am surprised that we are addressing Mineta’s issue along with Midoriya’s problem though. He is being moved to 1-D?” Aizawa looked at the official transfer papers with Nedzu’s signature on the table.

“Yes, we should have addressed his problem back during the training camp when he attempted to spy on the girls bathing but now is not too late either. 1-D is an all male class with a focus on bodily strength since most of the students are being prepared to become professional athletes. Mineta shouldn’t be able to find anybody to harass there. Just like Midoriya, he will be required to attend mandatory counseling sessions to correct his attitude towards women and girls. We are moving both students to their new dorms as well.”

“And Bakugou’s transfer request?”

Nedzu placed a paw on the papers Bakugou submitted. “Denied. As the principal of UA, I should expel Bakugou on the spot and send out an alert to blacklist him from all of the hero programs in Japan.”

Aizawa couldn’t believe his ears and All Might looked just as shocked. “On what grounds?”

If Midoriya’s punishment was to transfer classes, what did Bakugou do so wrong that should have him barred completely from becoming a hero?

“It is nothing he had done personally but I have received new information regarding Xanxus.” Nedzu leaned his chin on both of his paws. There was no charm in his voice or laughter in his eyes, instead, the Principal was dead serious as if he was about to walk into a meeting with the world’s leaders. “I am a curious creature and I went to dig further on this man. Utilizing my foreign contacts at my own expense, I obtained concerning news about Xanxus’s background. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, I have not kept any paper or digital trails and none of what you hear from me today shall leave this office, am I understood?”

Hearing that, both Aizawa and All Might nodded immediately.

“He is related to the Godfather,” Nedzu said slowly. “Xanxus is the son

of Vongola Ninth, the only *living* son of Don Vongola."

Vongola.

"He is a Vongola?" All Might was breathless. He had fought evil all his life and Vongola was an organization that even All For One had marveled at. All For One might have caused chaos and was named a king of Japan's underworld society but Vongola had been the long reigning emperor of the darker side of society all across the world.

The criminal royalty had been shrouded in mysteries and bloodshed since they were first recorded. If they were talking villains, Vongola was the one and only, a long line of crowns who stood at the top of what being villains meant.

Their approaches had softened in the recent generations but there was no doubt in Vongola's influence. They still kept control of the evils in the world.

Not only that, Aizawa could almost feel his heart stopping when he realized that his student was dating the son of Vongola's boss, someone who was likely to be leading Vongola next.

"I have a duty to report Bakugou's connection to such a dangerous villain to the police and HPSC. As stated in the Hero Registration Act, a person within a known criminal organization cannot be allowed to obtain a pro hero license unless they are willing to become a CI or ward of HPSC." Nedzu tapped his table and a hologram came up, indicating the section in the law. "Bakugou is only dating Xanxus but this man's status within Vongola is…well, I think you both can guess what kind of reaction HPSC will have."

Yes. They would demand Bakugou to become a spy and feed them information on Vongola. Even better yet, if Japanese heroes can apprehend such a high profile member of the world's largest criminal organization on Japan's soil, the international recognition and effects it would have would be phenomenal.

It would be the greatest shining victory for heroes and especially for Japan.

"Even if they do have him in custody, if there is no solid case against him, he would just walk."

Vongola has the best lawyers in the field and unfortunate accidents or evidence mysteriously becoming contaminated or going missing was common in cases brought against the mafia.

“I am afraid if we do approach Bakugou about the subject he might react badly and we would drive him towards the mafia.”

All Might placed a hand on his chin. “What if Young Bakugou doesn’t know about Xanxus’s real identity? He could be in danger.”

“I highly doubt that is the case. Bakugou seems to be fully aware of his boyfriend’s true occupation. From his parents’ change in attitude towards his relationship, it is safe to conclude that they had been greeted mafia style.”

Basically threatened then.

And Bakugou knew. He knew and he went along with it.

Nedzu’s tail swayed behind him slightly and his shoulders were tense. “Legally, we cannot arrest Bakugou because he is dating a villain. Not unless we have concrete proof of him helping in a crime. If we do spook them and cut off Bakugou’s chance of becoming a hero, Vongola has just gained another powerful arsenal. And you both know HPSC’s way of doing things would not fly with this young man. Becoming an enemy of Vongola’s at our current state is the same as suicide. This is why although I should be reporting him, I am denying Bakugou’s transfer papers and we will do everything we can to keep him at UA. I understand there is the risk of him being the spy for the villains but if he is of Vongola, we cannot just cut him loose.”

“He is not the traitor who leaked the information to the League of Villains,” All Might suddenly said. The pro hero might not be the best teacher but his senses were sharp when it came to his job as the symbol of peace. “If he was, the League didn’t need to kidnap him and they wouldn’t have been targeted by Vongola. But we should at least send Xanxus’s picture to the police. This is the first time such a high profile villain in Vongola’s identity is known.”

“I would but I was unable to find any security cameras that caught Xanxus’s face, not here and not at the hotel in Kyoto. Also, please try telling me what Xanxus looks like.”

Aizawa’s eyebrows twitched. “He has dark hair and a scar…scars? No. It is a mole.”

He stopped, aware of what was happening.

“I can’t tell you what he looks like,” he deadpanned. “I *know* what he looks like but the harder I try to remember and describe his

appearance, the fuzzier the image in my head becomes."

The thought of someone tampering with their heads without them even noticing made all three of their blood run cold. They had been compromised and they weren't even aware of it. What if the next time the villain decided to do something worse with their heads?

The strange sense of danger he felt when he met Squalo and Xanxus also made sense now. Those were mafia men, professional criminals of the highest possible caliber. They had another teen with them though, the boy wasn't too right in the head and kept referring to Bakugou as *"Princess"*. Why princess? Because Xanxus was the Don's son and essentially the same as a prince.

"That brings us to the next problem," Nedzu pulled up the video of Midoriya and Bakugou's confrontation in the park. "There are no security cameras in the area yet someone was able to send a file of this to Kaminari. The sender is untraceable even with our technology. Whoever is doing this is sending a message that there will be retaliation if we go after Bakugou's connection with Vongola. This is blackmail material right here."

Of course it was. A hero student clearly not respecting boundaries and forcing his love on another boy. The backlash would be immense especially when he used his quirk in an attempt to hurt the person who rejected him. If it came to that, simply expelling Midoriya wouldn't even be able to appease the public.

Aizawa could see how grave their predicament is. They were driven into a corner by forces working in the dark and now they had to play along. "Someone wanted us to find out about his connection to the mafia."

There was no way Nedzu could have found the information on Xanxus without help of malicious intentions. He was a foreigner and associated with the heroes, not exactly the kind of person even a contact would be willing to share such highly valuable information with. Anybody with a decent brain knew the mafia looked down on traitors within the family and they would make anybody selling the Godfather's secrets pay in blood and bones.

Those Italian mafias were notorious for their omerta oath too, it was why it was so hard for any undercover agents to get in on a loop important enough to catch the big fishes. Know too much and people die, they always die. The mafia had a way of cleansing their ranks to pluck out moles.

Nedzu now knew too much.

And he was as good as a dead rat.

Nedzu looked at Aizawa with approval glistening in his eyes. “Indeed. Someone wishes to pit us against Vongola. Even if Vongola did not strike us first, if Bakugou’s relationship with the mafia leaked, we would be facing an uproar and investigations.”

They were a hero school that allowed a student with mafia connections to get in. UA’s reputation would tank. Let go of Bakugou? Keep Bakugou in their school? There was no good choice for them.

“So what do we do now then?”

“I will speak to Bakugou personally to ensure he can have a safe environment at UA to continue his study, and then we will monitor him.” Nedzu “Any suspicious activities will be recorded and we will continue to watch for leads. Unless we have concrete incriminating evidence, we will not approach him carelessly."

Inhaling to stay calm, Aizawa felt the need to run over everything about Bakugou after he went back to his room. UA conducted an investigation for all applicants that made it through the final exam and then they went through the Bakugous’ record with a fine tooth comb when Midoriya mentioned bullying at his middle school. Aizawa did his own research into Squalo and the security company he worked at too. How could they have missed something this huge?

Or rather, that just showed how good Vongola was at this game. It was spine curdling, unnerving in a way that no amount of horror stories or tales of monsters under the bed could ever cause. Aizawa was not an easily spooked man but he felt watched and naked, where his every move had already been anticipated by an invisible but omniscient evil.

All Might had a stoic expression as he got up. “I will reach out to see if I can obtain old files on Vongola’s activity in Japan, maybe there is something in there we can use”

Nedzu approved of it. “Thank you and All Might, please keep this information from Midoriya. We do not want him to get any bright ideas of how to help Bakugou and we certainly do not want Vongola to target him. They would kill him.”

And they will not leave any traces behind.

Chapter End Notes

A long chapter...hmm, I feel like I've been too serious lately and I want more crack and my brain came up with plot bunny:

-Age up characters.
-Fem!Bakugou who is a model and her story with Xanxus is pretty much the same as here, except that she decided to be his cloud guardian and went full mafia route. Fem!Midoriya is a quirkiness but famous pop idol and she met Xanxus at a charity ball when she is in Italy. Cue Midoriya falling for Xanxus and catfight between Bakugou and Midoriya ensures. White and black lotus bitches battle! ☆=(ゝω･)/

Chapter 40: Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

There was a problem.

Katsuki was reading the latest jewelry catalog sent to him by one of Victoire's sponsors when he heard a knock at the door. Aizawa stood outside of his room and the man had *that* look behind his eyes.

There was no real word to describe the feeling that crawled down Katsuki's spine. Instinctively, he noticed the deeper layer of emotion that was controlling Aizawa. It was something Katsuki had grown up with, a haunting suspicion of mistrust that he was used to seeing on his parent's faces or on the members of other mafia families. Being mafia was a tug of war all about loyalty and backstabbing and Katsuki knew this game like the back of his hand because he played it as Victoire for his sky and for his family.

Aizawa was on guard with him. Or rather, the pro hero was *careful* around him.

Katsuki could see it in the slight arch of Aizawa's hand and the way his steps shifted ever so slightly as Katsuki walked behind him.

Why?

Why was his teacher suddenly suspicious of him? Did Deku say something to the teachers that painted Katsuki as the villain? No, he didn't think that was it. If even Half and Half could tell Deku was being a dick, there was no way the teachers couldn't judge right from wrong.

Something wasn't right here.

They stopped in front of Principal Nedzu's office.

"Welcome, Bakugou." Principal Nedzu was already seated at his desk in front of the windows and the rat offered him a cup of tea.

Katsuki didn't drink the steaming herbal tea. He sat down on the chair

across from Nedzu while hearing Aizawa closing the door behind him. The pro hero didn't stay for this meeting. "This about my transfer?"

"Correct," Principal Nedzu hummed as he pulled out the application papers. "We tried getting in touch with your parents but were unable to reach them. Their assistant said you can make the full final decision on this…would you like to reschedule a date with them so they could be here for you?"

"No need. Let's get this over with."

"It is strange for us to be signing off on such a big decision without a legal guardian present. Is this a normal occurrence at your place?"

"They are busy. Always have been. There's no need to bother them with this and they already gave permission," Katsuki said. His parents had left for the Milan show and whatever protest or disapproval of this they have, Katsuki didn't care. They could just swallow their displeasure and suck it up.

The rat of a principal stared at him for a long moment before giving Katsuki the application papers back. "I'd like for you to rethink your decision, Bakugou. UA is the best hero school in all of Japan and we have more to offer than Shiketsu. I'm sure you have already done all the research before applying in middle school."

That was true. From Katsuki's standpoint, UA's freer teaching style better suited his taste since Shiketsu had a much more militant ideology. They were stricter with phone access and internet time, which wouldn't be good for his Victoire career. It was also further away from Namimori.

"The most important reason of all is that *you* want to stay in UA." The smile on the principal's lips irked Katsuki's nerves in an unpleasant way.

"…I can't study in peace here."

"You don't have to worry about that. Midoriya is being moved to Class C as we speak." Nedzu spoke with confidence and Katsuki's suspicions grew. "1-C's classroom is on the other end of the hall in the education building from the hero programs. Your dorms are in separate buildings so you will not encounter him in any of the common areas, including garbage sites as the buildings have different designated garbage areas. You do not share any courses as Midoriya will have to undergo therapy before he can earn his spot back in the hero course.

He is not allowed to interact with you in any way or ask a third person to be the middleman unless the teachers and you consented in advance. The treatment plan Hound Dog and the specialist have planned will take at least a year, which, by that time if you are still uncomfortable with Midoriya being in the vicinity, we can have him join 1-B instead."

At least a year…then by the time Midoriya came back, they would be going into their third year. UA third years have less academic courses and more interning and job shadowing opportunities, which meant that if Katsuki played his cards right, he could be in Italy with his family.

That wasn't too bad.

And almost too good to be true.

"I didn't think you'd be this harsh on him." Normally it was the boys will be boys nonsense or a long rant about how Midoriya was being Midoriya. Or at least, that was what Katsuki had expected.

"Midoriya is not well and his thoughts are very dangerous. We cannot let someone with such a thinking pattern graduate as a hero." Nedzu didn't need to specify the details. Katsuki could already imagine the shitstorm that would go down if a hero was harassing others this way and got caught on camera. "This is for his own good and yours too. Midoriya has received many warnings and chances to change but since he is unable to recognize his wrongs, we will have to lay it out flat for him."

They were putting their foot down on the subject, which Katsuki appreciated. The proposed plan did sound enticing enough that Katsuki could overlook the whole incident with Midoriya. Besides, he didn't think he was going to get his way with Nedzu even if he sat here for another 3 hours either. The principal was smiling but it was abundantly clear that he had no intention of letting Katsuki go to another school.

He could pull himself out of UA and go to Italy directly but… something was odd here. Looking down at the papers, Katsuki decided to play it safe.

"I'll think about it," he said. "I just want to finish school and get a hero license without any problems."

Nedzu's grin grew wider. "Yes, of course. We want nothing but the

best for our students too and we'll do everything we can to help the eligible ones get there."

He dismissed Katsuki and the blond started making his way back to the dorm. When he got back, he was met with a frenzy of wide eyed classmates who all stared at him as if he was a piece of unguarded bacon and they were a flock of seagulls.

"What?" Katsuki barked.

"Okay, dude. We knew Midoriya must have been bad but God, we didn't know he was *that* bad." Kirishima came to pat Katsuki on the shoulder with sincere sympathy.

"I'm so sorry for helping him woo you," Ponytail apologized. She looked distressed and Earphones was trying to comfort her. "I shouldn't have helped him with the wardrobe and the other stuff. It was so wrong."

"I can't believe I actually thought you two would look cute as a class couple before."

Invisible Bitch thought what?

Katsuki's face scrunched up as more of his classmates gathered around him. "What the hell are you all on about?"

"Someone sent me a video of what happened and I was in the common area when it started playing, so everybody is kind of in the loop on it." Kaminari held up his phone and a video of the park incident played on there. "It's really weird though…Why send it to me and not you? It doesn't really look like it was filmed by a phone either so I told the teachers. You're cool with that, right?"

Katsuki's expression darkened as he watched the video played on Kaminari's phone. "Yeah, I'm fine with it. The teachers will get it sorted out."

Exhaling in relief, Kaminari sat down on the sofa. "Good. Maybe there was a security guard or someone with the security cameras who had enough of the nonsense and just decided to drop the evidence to us anonymously."

Katsuki wasn't listening any longer.

There were no surveillance cameras in Namimori park. One, because

the Student Disciplinary Committee members under Hibari patrolled the neighborhood so they didn't need machines. Two, because the mafia and Hibari didn't like getting recorded.

Somebody filmed this intentionally and Katsuki only had one candidate in mind.

Reborn.

Only Reborn could have filmed it in such short notice.

Why send this and make things known to UA? Why *now* of all times? It didn't really matter to Reborn if Katsuki was in Japan or not. The blond teen was just an added layer of insurance and he was sure Reborn's teaching plans could adjust to his vacancy easily. It wasn't worth it to go through such troubles of sending the video evidence to Kaminari when there were witnesses to Midoriya's creepy rant either. This was an extra nail in the coffin that wasn't necessary.

The hitman must know it was suspicious to send this to UA too and he went around Katsuki. No matter if UA managed to trace it back to Tsunayoshi's group or not, it would look suspicious either way. But he still did it anyway. Something prompted him to send the file.

He would only do so if he was certain that whether the mafia's involvement was known or not didn't matter. But Reborn had no reason to sabotage Katsuki. Making it known that Katsuki was connected to the mafia would only make people investigate Tsunayoshi's group more and dig too deep into Vongola. They were not getting rid of him because he was too close to Xanxus and Varia either. No, Reborn and CEDEF knew that Tsunayoshi needed Victoire to have the Varia boss's ears. An order by Vongola Ninth? That old man was the last person who would choose to order a hit on Katsuki right now. It was way too blunt and completely idiotic for the Godfather to sell information on his best assassin when he still needed Xanxus for the family. If he did, it would ruin his relationship with his only son further and Vongola Ninth wouldn't choose such an amateur way of doing it.

Mukuro…Dino…Byakuran…Katsumi went through each candidate inside his head but scratched them off one by one. They had no special motivation to do this. If someone wanted to take Vongola down, Xanxus fucking a hero student was scandalous but nothing that would seriously divide the family.

This only raised the heroes' suspicion on them all.

It was a stupid move.

Unless it was not meant as a tactic…but as damage control.

“I got some stuff to do,” he said as he pushed past his classmates and headed for the stairs. Inside his head, Katsuki came to one conclusion.

His teachers already knew about his connection to the mafia.

—---

This was a game of Chickens.

The first person to lose their cool and make a move first was the loser. Katsuki sat in class listening to Present Mic talk about his radio stories in fluent English. He was training their hearing skills in English and if it was any other day, Katsuki would say he was doing a decent job at it. Perfect pronunciation and speed and all.

But now he was too busy preparing for all the possible scenarios of how things could play out for him. Katsuki didn’t think the heroes would arrest him during school hours. If they knew he was connected to the mafia, then it wouldn’t be wise to call him out right in front of all the students. As a school, they have a responsibility to protect their pupils and if they tried to come after Katsuki, they would have to factor in the possibility of him taking another classmate hostage or harming them during the process. Katsuki wouldn’t hurt an innocent but so long as the possibility was on the table, the teachers would hesitate.

Then there was the fact of if UA would be willing to challenge Vongola. His teachers were not dumb and Katsuki knew if they really did had anything solid, he would have been arrested in the Principal’s office already. They don’t have evidence that Katsuki actually participated in anything incriminating and their authorities didn’t reach Italy.

They were stalling for time.

Katsuki didn’t think the heroes could find anything on Varia but he did draw up a few escape plans inside his head just in case. Some parts needed a few more creative ideas because he was certain Principal Nedzu would have planned to counter any escapes.

“Hey Bakugou,” Sero said while patting Bakugou on the shoulder. “Class is over. We’re going to the cafeteria, are you coming?”

“I–No, I got something else to do.” Katsuki stood up and shoved his hands into his pockets as he headed for the door. He walked all the way down the hall and descended on the stairs, heading towards the bathroom.

Katsuki saw Aizawa behind him in the reflection of the mirror. The man looked as if he was about to walk into a funeral and he had thick bags under his eyes, along with longer stubs on his chin than normal.

“Sensei,” he greeted with a poker face. Katsuki turned around, staring the pro hero straight in the eyes. The man could appear intimidating when he wasn’t slouching as if he was a curled up caterpillar but Katsuki felt oddly calmer.

“I’m not going to hurt you,” Aizawa-sensei said. The door to the washroom clicked shut behind him. Katsuki didn’t know they could do that but he wasn’t really surprised with all the robots going around the school.

In response, Katsuki bared half of a smile. “That’s a weird conversation starter.”

“And I hope you do not hurt me too.” Aizawa-sensei’s tone didn’t change as he studied Katsuki. “Bakugou, we need to talk.”

“Are you sure we should be having this talk? Sensei, some things are meant to be buried.” Pushing himself to sit on a dried portion of the sink, Katsuki didn't say anything more, and neither did Aizawa for the next minute or so.

To be honest, Katsuki didn’t want his teacher to die. Aizawa was stingy but he was a decent guy. If he started digging too deep, Vongola wasn’t going to just let a pro hero do as he pleased.

“I am not here to look for a fight or to make an arrest,” the man finally commented, voice more solemn than before. “It is about your parents. We obtained records of their flight logs for the past years and there are periods of months between them leaving and returning to Japan. There were no financial records of a nanny being arranged when they were away. You do not have other immediate families in the area and your neighbors were not asked to take care of you either…do you see where I am going with this?”

The family card with a spin. How lovely.

“It’s all in the past. Besides, what can you do if something really is

going on?" It was wrong for Katsuki to laugh but he couldn't help it as the sounds escaped him. "It's not that bad. Not all parents are perfect and I was an exhausting kid to take care of. The kind of kid with an ego the size of the sun that drives the adults crazy. They needed more time for their work and to rest, which they can't do with me around. It was fine. They left money and a phone, so I can take care of myself."

"You shouldn't have to."

"Life's a bitch, Sensei. My parents are good people, they do love me. It's me who is born fucked in the head that couldn't appreciate normal love. They are tired humans, not abusive monsters. They chose work because they had to pay the bills and put food on the table so I ain't got a right to complain." Scratching his neck, Katsuki took out his phone. "I'm guessing you guys are already monitoring my texts and phone calls, probably also got a call log to go with it. Then you would have seen my parents' texts. They were ready for a low maintenance child, which I, unfortunately, am not. They realized it is hopeless and we've settled that matter so there's no real need to go to court with messy custody battles. The school doesn't want me either."

Because he was now a hot potato considering who he was affiliated with.

"Does your parents know?" Aizawa didn't retort Katsuki's claim that the school didn't want him and he didn't specify what he was asking about either but it wasn't necessary. "Were they the ones who gave you away?"

"No. They're shit parents but decent people. Raised me on good morals and ethics, along with all the diversity and inclusivity stuff."

"Then why?"

Why choose that side? Katsuki could hear the silent questions running inside Aizawa's head. Why pick the mafia's side willingly? The heroes might be suspecting coercion or some kind of tempering within Kastuki but Katsuki didn't think letting them run on that idea for long would be wise.

He didn't need saving. Not from his band of lunatics.

"Do you know who Alicia Ferrisfield is?" Katsuki chose to throw a question back. He saw confusion on Aizawa's face and shrugged. "Guess not. She was an American actress about two decades ago. Started when she was a baby and then got the female lead roles in a

bunch of kid shows. People don't like talking about her though, not since news of her being an ass and throwing random tantrums on sets got around. Years later people found out that she along with a bunch of other little girls were being intimately harassed by directors and sponsors. Her parents were the ones setting up the meetings and she got ditched from her roles because her brother punched one of the bastards for her."

Katsuki could see Aizawa's expression shift.

"Then the commentary came: It's just a few words, just one touch and nothing more. Get a little thinner. Look a little happier. Get over it. If you were her, wouldn't you pick the brother who'd sucker punch the fucker in the face than the adults who just told her to smile too?"

He got no answer and he could tell from the tension in Aizawa's body that this topic was making the man uncomfortable in ways that seemed to be more painful than skinning his skin off his flesh with a blunt knife.

"Squalo," Aizawa said quietly, eyes dark as he caught on. His aura felt as if it had grown in sizes and the bathroom was suddenly a really tight space for a conversation like this one.

"Stupid shark can't keep his opinions to himself." Katsuki was probably talking too much already too. He sort of expected to be expelled. While he did want to be a hero, he always knew his connection to Vongola might blow up in his face. And Katsuki wasn't going to burn his bridges with his family just so he could become a hero.

Besides, no one said he couldn't go somewhere else and enroll in another hero program under an alias and disguise.

"And just tossed out Nedzu's plan A."

"What was the rat planning?"

Aizawa sighed heavily. "Through your willful cooperation, we can build a case that clears you of every and any wrongdoing. Give you a solid platform before your debut as a pro hero."

"I have not committed a crime you can prove."

"Being linked to Vongola's high executive makes you the same priority as the top A-rank villains."

“Are you going to arrest me now then?” Katsuki placed his wrists together and held them towards the pro hero. Cocking his head to the side, Katuki beamed in a challenging manner. “Or maybe you’re here to tell me that I am no longer welcome at UA and that I’d be a horrible hero anyways cause I don’t have the right kind of heart.”

He thought his stance was pretty clear. Katsuki wasn’t going to turn on his boyfriend for UA. No matter if they wanted to arrest him or just shag him, they would need to move him off campus and everywhere along the way were opportunities to escape.

“Sometimes it’s not a good thing to be so bright,” Aizawa said but he didn’t move any closer to Katsuki. “The Commission–”

“Will probably get the same information as you did.” That was what Katsuki would do to add fuel to the fire if he was the mastermind plotting behind all this. “Meaning they will be super interested in me, in making me one valuable asset.”

A disposable one at it too if things turned to shits.

“How long do I have?” Katsuki dropped his hands and asked. The Commission would be coming for him one way or another. Even if they couldn’t get him physically, they could still impose a bunch of sanctions or stuff that makes it impossible for him to obtain a hero license unless he cooperated.

“We have not been told to hand you over yet,” Aizawa admitted. “And…I think you do have potential to be a hero, Bakugou.”

Katsuki snapped his head up, surprised.

The pro hero took a step closer but he didn’t attempt to touch Katsuki in any way. In a calm but sad voice, Aizawa continued, “You have what it takes. You are intelligent and you have a gift in battle. It’s true that you might have some issues connecting to or empathizing with people but that doesn’t mean you’re automatically a failure in heroics. Even if they were tired, it wasn’t right for your parents to neglect you and let you raise yourself…they *should* have been there. People should have seen the signs and stepped in. They failed you. We all did and the bad people took advantage of it. I–”

He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. After a second, he opened them again and held Katsuki’s gaze. “I can’t relate to what you’ve been through and I still think it’s a very exploitative relationship where the villains are using you by promising familial and romantic

bonds. But you are right about one thing. There's nothing we can prove and association is not a crime by itself. You are your own person and you'd never jeopardize an innocent for profit. Even if it is not UA or even anywhere in Japan, I know you can be a great hero despite who your family is."

Clenching his fists, Katsuki shook his head. "You suck at this."

"It is you who is making everything too complicated, kid. UA don't have the means to face Vongola head on and HPSC is out of their minds if they think a two front war is going to end well for us. You're caught in the middle, just like us. I do not agree with many things but none of us want the situation to escalate further."

The door behind Aizawa unlocked and slid open. He turned to walk away and Katsuki exhaled when he couldn't see Aizawa's back in the hallway any longer.

This situation was getting out of hand. It was obvious that he couldn't just kill everybody at UA and make a grand escape. Katsuki didn't want to do that either. Not when…he tried to not think too much about what Aizawa just said. To hear that someone believed he could be a hero was strange for Katsuki. Sure, Bel and the others often said Katsuki would beat out his competition and take down the villains with his eyes closed but they were Varia. They were nutjobs with their moral compass screwed on so wrong and emotionally constipated that any compliments from their mouths should be taken with a grain of salt.

He shook those thoughts out of his head. Nothing that Aizawa said changed what he had to do or what could happen. Aizawa was a teacher and a pro hero, not exactly the kind of candidate Katsuki could depend on to defend what was important to him.

This was beyond the scope of what Katsuki could handle by himself and Xanxus was too far away.

Katsuki needed to talk to one Spartan tutor in the land of dreams, where they wouldn't be monitored.

2

The halls of all prisons started to look identical as time passed.

Toga placed a hand on the wall to steady herself. She was out of breath and everything in her ached as if there were needles exploding

inside her bones. Maybe this was what Little Mermaid had to endure when she first got her legs, where every step felt as if she was walking on knives or skipping over a road paved with hot coal.

Running had never been a more terrifyingly agonizing sport.

But she couldn't stop. Toga had woken up in confinement, where medical equipment beeped all around her and too many tubes and wires were hooked onto her for it to be comfortable. The room she was in was like a giant metal lock box with one exit.

She was freaking out.

The last thing that Toga remembered was dying. Shigaraki and the others were killed by assassins, *mafia* assassins. And they came for her too, shot her, cut her, hurt her in battle…these men moved differently from the heroes and police that Toga was used to. She couldn't make herself "disappear" from their line of vision as she normally could misdirect the crowds. They sensed her, could read right through her moves and they came for her head.

For the first time in her life, the sight of blood brought pain instead of joy.

The mafia killed her friends.

The heroes have her, that much she could tell. Toga's mind was still too hazy from the chemicals the doctors pumped into her veins and her brain was filled with sedatives. She probably sliced someone with a syringe she stole off their medical cart when they came to check on her.

Sirens were going off. The noise echoed in the narrow hall that was freezing and Toga held onto herself while her teeth chattered due to the cold. She was naked, with only a thin sheet of fabric she took with her when she ran from the room.

Her head was spinning and her eardrums felt as if they were going to burst.

When she passed by some windows looking into a storage room, Toga almost didn't recognize herself. There were so many scars on her body and her hair was chopped short because the ends had been burnt off. The marks reminded her of how she came close to death, how the mafia toyed with her and everybody else before they animed for the kill.

She didn't know how she was still alive.

But she couldn't look at herself any longer, not at the hideous monster in the reflection. There was no way she could blend into a crowd and continue to pretend to be a normal highschool girl with such large scars all across her face and body.

"I hate them," she muttered while putting the syringe needle into her arm with difficulty. She took her own blood and drank it, then used her quirk to morph into herself, her old self. Biting her bottom lip to prevent herself from crying, she stared at the smooth skin that hid away the ugly and angry marks on her.

Toga wanted revenge. She wanted to grab the boy with the tiara and cut him up as he did to her. This time, it wouldn't be about the blood or how pretty she could make him drench in red. She just wanted them to pay. She just wanted them to hurt for destroying the only place she felt remotely as if she could fit in.

But she needed to get out of here first.

She made it down another corner before she had a wing-like blade pointed directly at her throat. There was a hero here, ash blond hair and red wings, Hawks stared at her.

"Good morning," he said. "I need you to come with me quietly. Don't ask questions and don't resist, I'm getting you out of here."

"Why should I trust you?" Toga asked and her voice sounded like an old man's from inhaling smoke and not being in use for…months maybe?

He pulled his wing a bit away from her but didn't lower it completely. "Because I'm your only shot of getting out of here. It's a maze and you will rot in a corner before you find your way to an exit. Come on, Shigaraki is waiting for you."

"He's still alive?"

No, Tomura was dead. The mafia man shot him right in front of her eyes.

"As you are too," Hawks answered coldly. "Are you going to come or not? If not, I'll just tie you up and send you back to the guards, saying that I found you on my way in."

Toga didn't have a choice. She followed him quietly but quickly as they navigated their way through the dark halls with the red lights still blaring all around them. He must know the terrain well because they didn't encounter any heroes or guards, not even coming close to one at all. He did get them out but to where Toga couldn't recognize. They were at some barren hill, with wilting grass and a bunch of small hills surrounding the clearing.

There was a car waiting for them in the forest not far away. Everything was too easy and too smooth, so much so that Toga felt as if she had been set up.

Hawks was driving. "Get in," he said.

And Toga wondered if she could stab him to death then learn how to drive in under five minutes.

—---

On the hill adjacent to where Toga and Hawks' car sped off, Basil crouched on a tree branch as he watched the escape with a pair of binoculars. Pushing his bangs slightly out of his right eye, the mafia teen nodded.

"The targets had converged," he said into the hidden mic on his sleeves.

"I have a clean shot," a young boy's voice came through the communicator. Basil couldn't see where his teammate was stationed on the other hillside but he trusted Colonnello's sniping skills. Colonnello was Reborn's old acquaintance and one of the previously cursed babies of the rainbow. "Want me to take her out now, kola?"

"No, let her go." Iemitsu exhaled as he leaned against a boulder on the side of the road, a little tired from the red eye flight on such short notice. Reborn wasn't the only one who got wind of an info leak within Vongola's ranks. As head of the external advisors and with his son's safety on the line too, Sawada Iemitsu rushed back to Japan the first chance he got.

He couldn't let the heroes target his son right now. It was too early for them to learn that Sawada Tsunayoshi was going to be Vongola Decimo. And he needed to get rid of All For One too, the villain who was ultimately behind the info leak.

Not a lot of people outside of the mafia knew of Xanxus's true rank

within Vongola, which meant someone broke the Omerta vow and conspired or got a payout from an outside villain. His other subordinates were already on their way to capture the traitor who was trying to get free through a route in Spain. Iemitsu managed to find out that the old Japanese villain was involved because everything was too coincidental and targeted. AFO was looking for revenge and Bakugou Katsuki's existence was the perfect weak link.

That was a challenge to Vongola and the mafia's society as a whole.

Iemitsu couldn't let it slide. Also, the Ninth doesn't want to lose his future daughter-in-law (or was it son-in-law?).

"You sure, Boss?" Colonnello asked, voice a little too chirpy for a mission like this. "She saw Varia's faces. The heroes pulled a miracle stunt with their healing quirks but she's very weak right now. I say we take her out right now and cut any lead right here."

"No," Iemitsu repeated sternly. "She will lead us right to All For One. We will crush them all together once and for all."

Chapter End Notes

> The war between the heroes and villains are coming. HPSC messing things up, I also want to add Lady Nagant into the fun cause the villain's side need more players.
>
> Now I just got to squeeze the mafia into it and this is all a lovely bomb of chaos ready to set off LOL
>
> And maybe after the war we can have the Victoire reveal to the class.

Chapter 41: Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning: Mentioned human experimentation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

“I got questions that I’m sure I don’t want answers to.”

Tsuna sat down on the grass with both hands on his head as if that would prevent him from having to face his problems.

They were in someone’s dream. It was probably Mukuro’s since the scenery was exactly what Tsuna saw last time. It was a hill and a tree overlooking an orchid under a bright blue sky. There were some buildings in the distance but they were too far away for Tsuna to see clearly.

Everything in here felt real. The grass was soft and the ground a little dry. Sounds of rustling leaves came with the breeze and the sun felt warm on his skin.

But the people he was with definitely weren’t the company he’d want in his dreams.

There was Reborn, his evil tutor that Tsuna was sure had thought of new ways to torture him. Then Mukuro, who probably was plotting something and even if he wasn’t, there was bound to be confusing riddles that made Tsuna’s skin crawl.

And Bakugou Katsuki.

Tsuna wouldn’t say he disliked Katsuki. The blond hero student might be aggressive and a little mean-spirited but he was probably one of the saner people connected to the mafia that Tsuna knew.

“I’d like to know what is going on too for you both to be asking me to pull this meeting off.” Dressed in his usual camouflage T-shirt and a pair of jeans, Mukuro leaned against the tree as he crossed his arms in front of his chest. His eyes shifted from Reborn to Katsuki.

“UA knows about my connection to the mafia. They know Xanxus is

Vongola," Katsuki said. With his hands in his pockets, he stood in front of Tsuna with a blank expression.

Tsuna sucked in a breath. "D-Does that mean the heroes are coming for us?"

It was true that he fought a lot of people since Reborn showed up… and Gokudera and the others probably caused a good deal of property damages. Also, like yakuzas, mafia groups were designated villains and it wasn't uncommon for the heroes to raid or bring members in for questioning. However, if Tsuna was given the chance to redo things, he didn't regret standing up for his friends or to protect the people he cared about.

"They will not do that," Reborn hopped onto Katsuki's shoulder. "UA doesn't have that kind of authority or capacity to openly declare war with Vongola. They are an educational institution after all and their primary concern is their students. The adult heroes are going to be busy with another case soon too but we are going to arrange to have Mama out of the country."

Tsuna barely had the time to let out a breath of relief before his heart almost jumped out of his throat. "What do you mean?"

"There's a villain in Japan called All For One. He has been around for generations…since back when quirks first started actually. This man has a quirk that allows him to take the quirk of others and he amassed power during the time of chaos. All For One was the one behind the League of Villains and he stole Shigaraki Tomura's corpse."

Reborn went on to explain the history of this villain and how All Might was actually quirkless. His quirk was passed down to him, promised away by a hero who died fighting All For One. The quirk had passed through many hands already but the first owner was All For One's own brother. It was a lot of information that made Tsuna's head hurt.

"Why would he need the dead body?" Tsuna remembered the name of the villain who kidnapped him and Katsuki. He was a man with hands all over his body and light blue hair.

"All For One managed to resurrect Shigaraki. Most likely he had already altered Shigaraki beforehand with all the human experimentation they were doing. They have been very careful so far. Hawks, that hero was reared by HPSC and he has been commissioned to infiltrate the villains. To test his loyalty, the villains sent him to

break Himiko Toga from her confinements."

"Who?"

Katsuki clicked his tongue. "The weird girl who was waving a knife in our faces when we got kidnapped."

Okay, yeah, Tsuna remembered her.

"CEDEF has been tracking them but so far, Shigaraki have not made contact with All For One. Shigaraki and Himiko went to Deika City, where they battled the Meta Liberation Army."

"That's the organization who is advocating for free use of quirks for all?" Mukuro held out his hand and a book with a red cover appeared. It was a very familiar cover that Tsuna had seen in all the bookstores lately. "The leader is the CEO of some support equipment company and calls himself Re-Destro."

"Yes, exactly. Shigaraki defeated Re-Destro so now the Meta Liberation Army is under his command. The total number is unclear but Iemitsu estimated they have about 10,000 soldiers ready for battle. They are gathering an army to launch an assault on hero society."

"You said I would be interested in this conversation before I pulled all of you into dreamland but I still don't see how this involves me, Arcobaleno." Making the book disappear, Mukuro turned to look at Reborn with a sly smile. "Varia killed Shigaraki once, I don't see why they can't do it again. Law enforcement doesn't have anything on Sawada. Also, if the villains and heroes are planning an all out war with each other, Bakugou needs to decide if he's dropping out of UA. None of these need me. Fran or Chrome would more than suffice to create simple illusions…I can lend them to you for a price of course."

Reborn shook his head. "The problem is that Shigaraki got an upgrade. Basil was observing when the villains were fighting each other and he reported that Shigaraki's eyes were altered. He was using the Six Path of Reincarnation, exactly the same as yours."

Mukuro's smile vanished and Tsuna could feel the air shift. Everything in this dream of grass hills seemed to stop moving for a split second before returning to normal.

The Estraneos…they were the ones who used the kids in their own family as lab rats. They were experimenting on Mukuro and the others

before Mukuro finally killed them.

“Kufufufufu…I didn’t think there was anybody I missed when cleaning up the Estraneo family. Meeting’s over then, you deal with whatever is going on with the heroes and I'll tie up loose ends.” He was laughing but there was no warmth behind his voice as his body started to dissipate into the air.

“Mukuro, wait!” Tsuna yelled. He was pretty sure Mukuro was planning something unsavory and dangerous, which Tsuna didn’t really approve of but he also didn’t want somebody he knew to get hurt. Plus, if Mukuro really did get himself or his other associates into a bad spot, Tsuna didn’t think he had it in him to sit by and do nothing.

Reborn wouldn’t let him do that either.

The illusionist stopped, casting Tsuna a bitter glare. “What are you going to suggest? I made sure I massacred the entire Estraneo family so this Japanese villain must have gotten his hand on their research. Their success started with me. This is not Vongola’s business.”

“Ah…But it’s dangerous! And you heard Reborn, they have so many people on their side! Even if you take Chrome and everybody else with you, you don’t know if they have weird quirks. Plus, what about Nomus? Fran is just a kid too, you can’t possibly want him to fight villains like that.” Tsuna’s brain was going so fast that he was having difficulty translating all of his thoughts into words. “Can’t we just let the heroes handle the villains? All Might is still around.”

Reborn hopped over and smacked Tsuna on the back of his head with a green hammer, causing the boy to fall to the ground. “Dumb-Tsuna, it became Vongola’s business when All For One sold Xanxus’s information to UA. And the research data from Estraneo was destroyed years ago. The fact that All For One got his hands on it means that there’s a traitor within the mafia ranks. If we let the villains do as they pleased in Japan, it is not just disrupting the balance of the underground society, it is also a smear on Vongola’s honor. Besides, Mukuro is your mist guardian, what kind of boss are you if you don’t help your guardians?”

“I don’t need Vongola’s help,” Mukuro said.

“Who cares if you need help or not? I got beef to settle with those fuckers too so I’m going either way,” Katsuki commented sharply. “They really threw a wedge into my plans and Varia doesn’t fail

missions, we are going to make sure Hands and Derange Blood Bitch stay dead this time."

Mukuro sneered. "What happens to you after that? If I was on the villain's side, I would expose your connection to the mafia to shake the people's faith in heroes. If they found out you participated in killing villains later, then you've screwed yourself, your teachers and friends, along with Vongola over. You can never be a hero then."

Tsuna looked at Katsuki with worry in his eyes. He knew how much the blond teen wanted to be the best hero out there.

"That is why we have to kill them before they talk. Only dead people are guaranteed to be able to keep secrets." Katsuki dug his heel into the dirt, annoyed at the development of things. "I would arrest Varia members if I caught them in the act during my working hours but giving all the information on my idiots over to the heroes? Not happening in a million years. I'm not going to snitch just to prove I am redeemable enough to be a hero. Even if I did, they are going to hold it over my head and keep me on a leash too. I want to be a hero but I want my freedom more."

Tsuna didn't want to see his friend give up on his dream and become a mafia full time. That didn't sound very right or fair for someone who worked so hard to obtain his dreams. Katsuki had his faults but Tsuna wouldn't say that the blond was incapable of becoming a hero. He could save people, he could defeat villains, he was trustworthy and honorable…but he knew where the heroes were coming from too. People weren't automatically bad people if they associated with the wrong crowd but no one wanted to bet on how easily people's decisions could be swayed by emotions.

"I can't leave the campus and it's going to be hard making calls out to Xanxus. Reborn?"

"That will be taken care of," Reborn said with a nod. "Iemitsu is keeping surveillance on Shigaraki and the MLA. Shigaraki is unstable. The experimentation on his body is breaking him down from the inside but a regeneration quirk is keeping him alive. They are planning to improve him further. CEDEF is going to look for an opening to sabotage their plans but with so many soldiers gathering under MLA and the heroes being involved, they are digging deeper into All For One's backup plans before making a move. They will keep Varia and us posted."

Tsuna found it hard to believe Mukuro was going to sit by and wait. “Bakugou-kun is stuck at school, Mukuro…you’re not going to listen to what I say. Dad’s already watching the villains. What am I going to do? Wait, does that mean we might have to fight villains?”

The looks from everybody else's faces seem to be chiding him in the *you just realized this now?* sort of way.

“Haven’t you already been fighting villains, dumb ass?” Katsuki questioned sarcastically.

“Ugh…” Technically mafias were villains and yes, by that logic, Tsuna had fought plenty of villains.

“You saved the fucking world once already, can’t be that hard to do it again.”

“...If I can, I would really rather not be the one who has to save the world. Are you really going to give up on being a hero?”

Katsuki had been very calm through the whole thing. He didn’t swear as often either, which was a bit concerning if Tsuna was being honest. Like the calm before the tempest, something felt very off.

“That’s the worst case scenario. I’m not going to betray Xanxus just because the pressure is piling up. If the villains decided to expose me then it’s better off to ditch the hero route anyways. Those guys in my class don’t deserve to be connected to the mafia just because of me. My teachers too. That’s not their problem.”

“The power of public opinions is a powerful weapon,” Reborn agreed.

They were friends with someone connected to the mafia. The school allowed a possible villain to infiltrate their ranks. How could people trust their judgements if none of them noticed anything odd when they were living and studying together for so long? If that information was released, it would blow up UA’s reputation and add roadblocks to the other students’ debuts.

Katsuki shrugged. “We don’t know where the villains are aiming to attack and since you are the Decimo candidate, you might be targeted too. CEDEF, Varia, Rokudo, and I will take care of things but you should be prepared in case they launch an assault on you too. The Simon family is with you at school and there’s Hibari along with the others…just try not to go anywhere alone.”

Something was definitely off with Katsuki. He called Mukuro by his last name instead of some nickname that involved curse words. Katsuki wasn't actually as nonchalant about the whole situation as he appeared to be. The blond said nothing more as the scenery around them all began to fade.

But Tsuna couldn't help but feel that the shine in Katsuki's eyes were duller than normal.

Tsuna woke up with a jolt. He almost fell out of bed and when he looked up, Reborn was sitting up in his hammock, staring down at him.

"Don't wake Mama and the kids, Dame-Tsuna."

"Reborn," Tsuna said, eyebrows knitted tight together. "If-If the villains launched an attack on the heroes…normal people would get dragged into it too right?"

"And us too. All For One isn't the type of man to stop with just Japan."

Tsuna didn't think it would be easy or that All For One was some misunderstood bad guy, wanting to right his name and make society reflect on their mistakes either. He remembered Katsuki's empty eyes, the way that the blond bickered with Xanxus or how the two kissed. Xanxus wasn't a good guy and their relationship had a lot of problematic issues…but there were still tender moments right? When Katsuki was Victoire, he had such adoration in his eyes when he spoke of his love and Xanxus was, well, more manageable with his lover by his side.

An image of a family of three reunited on the battlefield came to mind. The little girl with her bright smile and pretty dress without a speck of dust, the hero who held her as if he had the whole world in his arms, and the tyrant who kept a sturdy hand on both of them to make sure they didn't collapse.

It was messy but they were a family.

Tsuna wasn't even sure what Xanxus thought and it certainly wasn't any love story of the century…but he would like for this story to have a happy ending.

"I want to do something about this," he said without realizing he said it out loud.

Reborn smiled. “If that is your decision as Vongola Decimo, do what you think is suitable, Tsuna.”

2

Moving to Class C wasn’t as horrible as Midoriya imagined it would be.

His friends and old classmates had strong words they liked to talk to him about and yes, they delivered their thoughts to him in a very powerful fashion. They didn’t approve of how he thought of Katsuki and they warned him that they would no longer be his friend if he continued down such a dangerous slope of thoughts.

It was creepy and weird, not to mention way too entitled according to everybody.

They still talk to him but he was removed from the Class A group chat.

There were some rumors and weird whispers all around the campus of course but since he didn’t have the usual training classes, he was spending more time with Hound Dog and Dr. Jefferson. He also focused more on reading up the notes All Might compiled on the previous One For All users, trying to learn their quirks.

It took a few more sessions but he was starting to understand why Katsuki hated him so much.

The way he decided to approach the blond was horrible. He didn’t consider the kind of embarrassment and pressure it put on the other boy with how he declared his love in public and all. Even though he didn’t think Xanxus was good for Katsuki, it wasn’t his place to be advocating that right in Katsuki’s face. Maybe Midoriya was the better option, maybe he wasn’t. Only Katsuki had the right to decide who he wanted to be with.

Midoriya tried to remind Dr. Jefferson about all the violence that Xanxus exhibited but the doctor merely nodded.

“Was Bakugou injured or expressed fear about the way Xanxus treats him?”

“No.” More like Katsuki wouldn’t turn down a fight if the arguments turned physical.

“You love heroes and All Might right? What if someone is constantly telling you you’re too much of a loser by being nerdy about heroes? And when you refuse, they go ahead and toss out all your All Might merchandise?”

“They have no right to do that,” Midoriya answered. If someone really did throw away all of his stuff, he would be super upset and angry.

“Exactly.” Dr. Jefferson looked please. “Withholding financials or essentials for life, even a beating are all typically what people associated with abuse. Violence shouldn’t be condoned. Sometimes though, abuse is not always physical. It could be very small stuff, just an insult to people’s pride and passion, talking down to them constantly or it could be taking and destroying things that people love. For you, it is the hero merchandise. For someone else, it could be their plants or even a creepy doll. There will be plenty of hobbies that other people like and you will not agree with. You can’t correct all of them even if you feel it is harmful to them. Withholding their joy when they are not hurting themselves or others because of it is also a form of abuse.”

Katsuki was functional and being with Xanxus wasn’t ruining his life. Like junk food, Midoriya could highlight the health risks of consuming too much but he couldn’t stop Katsuki from eating it.

“Now imagine if I demand that you cannot own anything related to heroes and you must stick to a routine of eating the same things at the same time every day, do the exact scheduled activity on the dot and wear only the things I approve of. No friends on weekends, and when you speak to others you must use the dialect I deem proper.” Dr. Jefferson painted a very depressing picture in Midoriya’s head. He found that life unfair and oppressive.

The doctor said that was how Katsuki would feel if he complied with dating Midoriya. Being in love was supposed to make people better, not sap them of all of their energies and happiness.

“Not everybody makes the right choices everyday, Midoriya. There are no ‘bad’ choices either, it is all about the context surrounding the choices. Bakugou made his choice and I’m sure he has his reasons for loving that man you find despicable. You do not have to agree with it or be super happy for him, but you shouldn’t disrupt his life and demand for your feelings to be prioritized when it is his life.”

Dr. Jefferson gave him homework too. He asked Midoriya to review

literature that depicted love or comment about celebrity romances. Midoriya saw videos of an old man holding umbrellas over their own heads, completely unaware of how all the rain was dripping onto his wife's head. Parents who micromanaged all aspects of their kids' lives with physical punishment because the kid lost a mark on their test.

They all claimed to love the person they were mistreating dearly.

Midoriya felt bile creeping up his throat.

It was close to March when Midoriya was called into an office with All Might and Aizawa. The conversation was about All For One and Shigaraki. Shigaraki wasn't dead. He managed to crawl back from hell, whether it was as a Nomu or as himself wasn't clear though.

The villains were planning something big.

"They want to bring down hero society and eradicate all the heroes. MLA plans to launch large-scale attacks on multiple major cities and advocate for the free use of quirks during that chaos. We do not have enough heroes to be everywhere at once and when disaster strikes, people will do anything to survive or protect their families. By then, law would be meaningless and All For One plans to take advantage of that chaos so he could rise to the top again." All Might finished explaining.

All of the hero students were going to be mobilized to help with foiling the villains' plans.

"I have requested for you to join because this is a matter that concerns All For One. Aizawa has agreed."

Aizawa-sensei folded his arms in front of his chest. "I do not agree with you two hiding the secrets of All For One and One For All from me when I was in charge of Midoriya's education but desperate times need desperate answers. This is a one time exception, Midoriya. You will still be in Class C after the whole ordeal is over as your sessions with Dr. Jefferson isn't completed yet."

Midoriya could understand that.

"What are we going to tell the class and…Bakugou?" He was pretty sure Katsuki still didn't want to see him.

"You do not have to worry about that," Aizawa-sensei said. "Bakugou will not be with you and most of the students during this operation.

We are going to allocate you each to a position where you can be of the most use."

That sounded logical but Midoriya couldn't help but feel there was something nastier swirling beneath the surface. He wanted to ask if Kacchan was okay but he remembered Dr. Jefferson's words. He shouldn't be poking into Katsuki's life so much.

Midoriya left the meeting after a lengthy talk with Aizawa and All Might about One For All. Aizawa expressed that he still believed Midoriya could be a good hero but he couldn't let his misguided heart dictate what he did or said any more.

Love might be an obsession but like all addictions, when it gets too much, it must be buried.

Time was either going to be his cure or his last poison.

Midoriya wasn't a complete maniac or brainless stalker either. He knew how important taking down Shigaraki was. The shock that Shigaraki was still alive didn't last long because…well, he supposed deep down he always thought Shigaraki wouldn't die so easily. Sometimes he still remembered the smile on the villain's face when he approached Midoriya at the mall that day.

It was pure evil.

Undiluted, raw evil that just wanted destruction with no regard for anything other than that goal.

Midoriya was on his way back to the dorms when he saw Katsuki standing around the corner. Hesitant, he wondered if he should take a detour but the blond was already staring at him.

Something was wrong.

The boy Midoriya knew all his life wasn't crying and he wasn't pissed off either. Instead, he looked rather calm and that itself scared Midoriya. Katsuki was always loud, even when he was quiet and said absolutely nothing, his presence was still large. However, right now Midoriya wouldn't even have noticed him if the blond wasn't standing directly in his path.

"Follow me," Katsuki said while pointing behind him with his thumb.

Maybe Kacchan wanted to beat him up.

Midoriya followed in silence. They ended up in a very secluded corner close to some janitorial equipment. There were rags and buckets, along with giant mops.

“You’ve always assumed to know what I am thinking,” Katsuki said as he closed the curtains. The room went from well lit to dim and the shadows in the corners grew in size. “I don’t need you to assume, I just need you to listen right now. You hear me?”

He nodded, half expecting Katsuki to blow him up if he didn’t show that he agreed.

“I know about All For One and One For All, don’t ask me how I know. I know that fucker wants to blow the world up in fucking flames and you’re the heir that All Might chose. That’s how you got your miracle cure to all your weeping problems. Not that it really matters since it’s all done and set. What’s important is how you use that going forward because that battle that’s happening with the villains? It’s going to be a big one and you better be at your top game for it.”

“Kacc–Bakugou, what is going on?” Midoriya only realized that his voice raised an octave too late. Panic raced through his nerves as every hair on his body warned him that this conversation sounded wrong. It sounded somber, like a farewell warning before the end. A state of blankness took over his head no matter how hard he tried to figure out what was going on.

Katsuki kept calm even as Midoriya grabbed his shoulder in a vice-like grip. “They are sending me to kill Shigaraki,” he said as if the teachers merely asked him to pick up a pencil from the ground.

Midoriya’s eyes widened in horror.

“I…you…why?” He managed a pathetic attempt of a question.

“Because that is the compromise. Because Hands should already be dead and he isn’t and All For One is fucking things up for the wrong people.”

“What compromise? Why would they send you to face Shigaraki? All Might and our teachers…so many pro heroes are still present! And there’s me!” He was the one who inherited One For All. That was his burden wasn’t it? Why was Katsuki the one being sent to face the greatest danger?

Katsuki shook him off. “You were half right about Xanxus. He’s not a

good guy. He's mafia."

His words were a cold bucket of water that poured down Midoriya's head.

Mafia.

That term carried much more impact than yakuza these days. Japan's organized crime dwindled because of All Might but everybody knew it was a different story across the globe. Mafia meant crime. They were lords of sins and the ones who controlled 80% of the underground shady businesses. The rest of the 20% were villains and small time crooks that heroes capture on a daily basis.

Everything was making sense.

The way Xanxus spoke and how he used the guns, how his subordinates were all unnerving and eerie, or the immense wealth that they seemed to have. He was mafia, probably high ranked within the mafia's world too. The man was every bit of the kind of character he appeared to be.

Yet Katsuki loved him.

"The school already knows and the villains are probably going to use it against us since they want to bring down hero society. Scandals and corruption are going to rile up the public a lot. UA's going to have to let me go when push comes to shove so I was thinking about it. Neither side wants this to blow up in our faces but I don't want to be a lap dog for the hero commission."

"Are…Are you giving up?" Midoriya felt that he should be angry. No way was Kacchan giving up on his dream of becoming a hero right? He wouldn't do that. Bakugou Katsuki didn't give up, not for anyone or anything.

But looking into the other boy's calm eyes, Midoriya couldn't bring himself to demand any confirmations in anger. The fear slithered higher up, wrapped around his heart and squeezed his lungs until he couldn't breath.

"If you want to call it that, then sure. To me, it's the logical choice though. Then you and the rest of the idiots wouldn't get dragged into the mess and my lunatics are safe too. You know, I've always told him that I would toss him under the bus if we got caught or that I'd kill him if he did something really bad but I guess when it comes down to

it, I just talk grand. Maybe if the circumstances were different I'd make another choice."

"You can still make a different choice."

"I can't."

"Why not? If you're going to kill Shigaraki–"

"That doesn't even anything out. I would kill Shigaraki and burn his body under a gallon of kerosene if that was what it took for him to stay dead no matter which side I am on."

Midoriya was speechless. He understood now. Katsuki was only telling him all this because he was All Might's successor and since this matter involved a generations old feud between All For One and One For All, Katsuki was giving him the warning so he could pick up the pieces after the mess.

"...Is Xanxus that important to you?" So important that Katsuki was willing to throw away everything he worked for just to keep the mafia safe and stay with him. Midoriya knew the blond considered UA, their classmates, and their teachers, maybe even the pro heroes too but they were not the main reasons behind his decisions.

"He gave me a home so I'll do the same for him." Katsuki smiled softly, the normal tension and all the anger melted off the lines of his body. His voice was barely above a whisper but the heaviness behind it all shook Midoriya to his core. "Nobody is touching my family, Deku. Not with dirty tricks like this."

This Katsuki Midoriya had never seen before. Too quiet, like the dead. His skin was pale and his lips red but everything about him reeked of a withering death. It was the kind of decay that came with a pungent sweet aroma of slowly decomposing dried petals.

Rotten and poisonous.

It finally smacked into him like a brick, nailed into him as if someone had hammered a wooden stake through his heart: He never really understood Bakugou Katsuki. Not even close.

"Play your part and keep your mouth shut, Deku." Katsuki walked away. "You should be happy, they might let you back into the hero class early after this."

The blond disappeared through the doors, leaving Midoriya alone with his thoughts.

He slumped down against the wall, defeated and frustrated.

“Stupid Kacchan...” he muttered with a hand over his eyes. Tears were threatening to fall down his cheeks and his voice broke. “How can I compete with that?”

Or rather, how could he muster up any dumb bravado to attempt anything else when the boy he loved shared a bond with someone else so deep? It was so stupid. The resolution behind Katsuki’s decision made every love or declaration that Midoriya ever made paled significantly in comparison. The teachers were right. He had a crush and it was just that, a childish crush that took an obsessive turn.

A joke in comparison.

Sniffling, Midoriya got up. They have villains to fight.

And for the first time since this whole mess, he would actually respect Katsuki’s choice, even if it may be their last as well.

Chapter End Notes

Cheers! Also, it's Xanxus's birthday so I think I should try to write something for him...hmm, we'll see if I can type fast enough LOL.

Happy October, everybody :)

Chapter 42: EXTRA - SMUT

Chapter Notes

> Happy Birthday Xanxus! We all love our bad tempered Boss (≧▽≦)

When Xanxus opened the door to his bedroom, he saw black and white fabric spread on top of his bed that shouldn't be there. There was someone in his bed and the only thing that stopped him from immediately shooting the person was the familiar mess of blond hair on his pillow.

Katsuki slept soundly in blissful slumber. Xanxus observed the black dress with white lace on his little boyfriend. Most of the maids in both Varia's castle and Vongola's head manor had a more Victorian styled outfit, with an ankle-length dress and a white apron without any lace. The only thing setting them apart from normal maids in civilian households was that instead of heels or Mary Janes, they were issued protective boots that would be easier to run in.

While Katsuki had the same frilly white headset as the maids, his skirt was a lot shorter than the standard one, coming up to his thighs and there was definitely too much unnecessary and flimsy lace for this to be a proper work attire. Katsuki turned over in his sleep and his skirt was rolled up slightly, revealing the white garter belt connected to his stockings. It was obviously a set since the lace patterns all matched. The skin on his thigh was milky white and a striking contrast against the black of the dress. He had a pair of black Mary Janes on and his feet were dangling off the bed.

Lussuria. Xanxus concluded with a slight arch in his eyebrow. He wasn't really curious about what his subordinate and lover were up to. They were Varia so everyday they had something weird going on and he didn't particularly care how Lussuria or Katsuki wanted to dress inside the castle.

"What are you wearing?" he asked.

Katsuki's eyes snapped open and he yawned.

"This is a maid's outfit that Lussuria made," Katsuki explained with a bit of raspy sleep still lingering in his voice. He got up, hands reaching out towards Xanxus, asking for a hug silently. "Thought I would

surprise you."

His cheeks were slightly pink and Lussuria must have sewn a little padding inside his dress along with altered the seams to better fit Katsuki's form. The blouse portion in front of his chest was white and he had a red brooch with black ribbon with a small embroidery of Varia's emblem at the edge.

Xanxus ignored his lover's arms reaching for him and went over to his desk. Curling a finger, he gestured for Katsuki to come to him. Katsuki climbed out of bed but when he got close, a slap came down on his bum.

"Xanxus!" Katsuki hissed.

"What kind of shit maid falls asleep while on the job?" Xanxus pulled Katsuki over his lap and spanked the blond on the butt again. There was more laughter than bark behind his voice.

Katsuki rolled his eyes while kicking his legs against the desk and floor. Another slap came down and then his skirt was lifted. Xanxus pressed his hand over the curve of the blond's butt. The muscles there were firm and round, covered by the almost see through fabric of his underwear with small ribbons on either side.

Pull on the ribbon slightly and the whole thing came undone, like a present being unboxed. Xanxus spanked him, painting the white skin a rosy red and watching the muscles jiggled underneath his palm. Katsuki's muscles were starting to fill out, rounding out the curves of his body. It was never going to be an hourglass kind of soft figure but Xanxus enjoyed it nonetheless.

It didn't take long for Katsuki to start moaning and squirming. The red on his skin deepened with every spank and his erection was rubbing against Xanxus's thigh.

"Xanxus…Boss, stop," Katsuki's pleas were broken up by gasps and moans. He made sweet little noises when Xanxus pushed a finger into him, working him loose. Soon, he was dripping wet with lube and precum.

Katsuki yelped when a piece of ribbon from his underwear was tied around the base of his cock, tight enough to make sure that he couldn't find release. Pushing the paperwork to the corner of his desk, Xanxus put the teen on the table and fumbled a bit with the layers of the skirt.

He touched metal.

“Really?” he asked with an arched eyebrow as he pulled the small pistol out. Katsuki panted through glossy pink lips underneath him but managed an innocent smile. Large red eyes filled with tears stared up at him, playing dumb.

Tossing the weapon to the side and throwing the lingerie to the ground, Xanxus undid his zippers and pushed himself into his psycho little bitch. The teen’s legs kicked out, the end of his heels tapping against carvings on the backrest of Xanxus’s chair. Xanxus sealed Katsuki’s screams with a kiss and he didn’t bother undressing his lover completely.

He was probably going to find more weapons underneath all this lace and fabric.

Katsuki clenched down around him, crying when their lips parted and Xanxus let out a low satisfied hum due to the heat around his cock. There was a pull on his tie that forced him to lean down closer for another kiss.

“Let me cum?” Katsuki whined between sobs as he hooked a leg around Xanxus’s waist. “Please?”

“No, keep your legs spread.”

The blond teen muttered curses but complied obediently, letting Xanxus thrust into him harder. Xanxus undid the buttons of Katsuki’s blouse halfway, watching as those chest muscles rose and fell with every heave of breath from the blond. The corset was a nice touch, emphasizing a nice perkiness of round milky flesh decorated with two pink buds. He rubbed those muscles, fondling and playing with them, feeling how the flesh relaxed in his palms. They weren't flat and meatless but had just enough of a curve to fit against Xanxus's palm.

“Ah!” Katsuki yelped in both pain and arousal when Xanxus pulled on his nipples. The man twisted them, rubbing the flesh between his fingers and tugging on them until they turned a deeper shade of red. He scraped his nail against them, making Katsuki gasp and tighten around his cock while he rammed in.

“Xan-Xanxus!” Katsuki’s whole body was flushed pink and his legs trembled. His tongue lolled out, a wet piece of flesh covered in saliva.

“Yeah?”

“D-Don’t bite me. Hmm! No sucking either!”

Xanxus ignored him, leaving any marks he pleased on the soft chest before playing with Katsuki’s swollen nipples with his tongue. He flicked them, caught them between his teeth, and sucked on them while his lover begged to be released. Despite the cries and whiny protests though, Katsuki was obviously enjoying being toyed with while getting fucked. He tugged on Xanxus’s tie when the Varia boss attempted to pull away and his walls were squeezing Xanxus’s cock eagerly.

The whole office was filled with the sound of sloppy wet sex.

Katsuki cried his name, moaning the syllables through lips swelling slightly from being kissed and whispers of *“Boss”* followed overwhelmed pleas when Xanxus picked up the pace. The teen’s cock wasn’t fully erected and it lay hidden underneath the apron and skirt. Staring down at Katsuki with a hand against the desk for support beside the blond’s head, Xanxus supposed it really did felt like he was fucking a woman.

Not that it made any big difference to him. His brat was still the same loud and noisy brat ready for murder either way. A beautiful mess really.

He finished by spilling his cum into Katsuki. Cleaning himself with some wet wipes, Xanxus zipped his pants up and sat back into his chair to observe his work. His lover sprawled on his desk, hole fucked open revealing a bit of the white semen inside and pale skin flushed pink. Hickies marked over his chest while a bite mark was around his left nipple. The small nubs had been played with so much that along with the areolas, they were a deep shade of red and erected fully, covered with a thin layer of shine from getting licked and sucked. His usual sharp gaze was hazy and he looked slightly out of it.

Xanxus pulled his tie off. The silk was wrinkled from how hard Katsuki had held onto it. Rolling it up and stuffing it into Katsuki’s abused anus to stop the cum from dripping out, he chuckled a bit when the boy groaned.

It took Katsuki a few more minutes before he recovered enough to support himself up into a sitting position. Looking down at what Xanxus did, he frowned as he redid the buttons on his blouse.

“Pervert,” he muttered while kicking Xanxus. It didn’t pack as much power as normal since his muscles were still like mush, all spent and

weak.

“You were the one who offered.”

Katsuki slipped off the desk and straightened out his skirt, making sure that all the layers were in their proper places and the ribbons tied correctly before picking up his underwear from the floor. “I wanted you to compliment me, not fuck me.”

“Same things.”

Glaring with a blush, Katsuki stepped on Xanxus’s foot with his heel and ran for it. He could still feel Xanxus inside of him so his movements were a bit awkward. Katsuki went to clean himself up in the washroom but he didn’t bother changing out of the outfit. With a bit of embarrassment, he pulled the semen soaked tie out of himself and tossed it in the trash. When he finished and got out of the washroom, he saw Bel coming down the hall.

The prince was in casual clothing. Black shirt and blue jeans, with a pair of black boots but his tiara still sat on top of his head.

Bel walked around Katsuki, studying the maid’s outfit.

“Are you plotting new ways to kill some of the lower ranking members?”

“No.”

“That’s no fun.”

Katsuki made a face at him. They made their way to the kitchen, where instead of the usual chefs, it was Lussuria standing in front of the oven. The sun guardian didn’t have his usual fur jacket and he threw his tie over his shoulder to avoid it getting caught. The air smelled sweet and there was a bunch of chocolates and fruits on the counter.

At the kitchen island, Levi was eating cereal straight from the box like a madman. When he saw Katsuki, he looked behind the blond as if checking if Xanxus was around before turning his attention back.

“Whose murder are you planning?” He backed away carefully with his cereal.

“I’m not planning on killing anybody. Why do you all assume I’m out

for blood when I dress nice? Also, no smoking." He pulled the pack of cigarettes out of the pocket in front of Levi's chest. Katsuki could tolerate the older men drinking but he absolutely despised the scent of nicotine and tobacco. He hated that aroma, it was sickly and filled with chemicals that stained lungs black and fingers yellow.

Levi snorted but he didn't make an attempt to grab the smokes back. It had been a pack he just kept on him for more cordial purposes. Sometimes a bottle of good wine or a nice bit of tobacco could get people talking faster than any punches. Although he had pride in being Varia, not every part of their missions had to be filled with blood and Levi didn't mind being a bit more patient if it meant getting results for his boss.

"If I tell you to disarm yourself right now it's not going to take five minutes for you to finish pulling out all the weapons you have on you? Those heels count too."

"Shut up before I use them on you then." Placing his hands on his waist, Katsuki scowled. Small footsteps came from behind him and soon, Eri poked her head through the door to the kitchen. Mammon was sitting on top of her head as she tried to keep balance. The illusionist floated off.

"Eri!" A smile bloomed on his face as he bent down to pick the little girl up. "Oh, did Luss dress you up too?"

She nodded with a bit of a blush. The little girl was in a mini version of the maid's outfit. It wasn't altered to look sexy like Katsuki's and the skirt was longer in length. More ribbons and her shoes were flat to avoid tripping risks.

"I had left over fabric so I thought I'd make another," Lussuria said in a sing-song voice. "My dears, you look so cute together!"

Katsuki preened and gave Lussuria a kiss on the cheek. Seeing that, Eri looked up at Lussuria too and copied him. Lussuria happily kissed them back before asking them to move out of the way so he could get the cake out of the oven.

"See, this is how you should be reacting." Katsuki set Eri down on a stool before pointing an accusing finger at Levi and the rest of the males in the room.

"Anybody else, sure. I refuse to believe you're not planning death and torture while dressed in that though." Levi continued to mutter about

psychological torture under his breath.

“I can be nice.”

Narrowing his eyes, Katsuki went over and kissed Levi on the cheek. The man froze and choked on his cereal. Katsuki laughed and moved on to his next target. Bel barely looked up from his game as Katsuki kissed him too. The prince chuckled before pointing to Mammon.

“Gotta be fair, Princess.”

Mammon was harder to catch since they were floating in the air but Katsuki managed to grab a hold of their cloak and dragged the illusionist down.

“I demand a fee for such violation of bodily autonomy,” Mammon said as they wiped their face with a tiny handkerchief.

Eri got her own little kiss on the cheek too. She was giggling slightly as Katsuki gave her a piece of sliced apple afterwards. She doesn’t talk much when the Varia members were around, but Katsuki supposed they just had to give her more time to adjust and be comfortable voicing her thoughts.

Squalo came into the kitchen with a bottle of wine in a paper bag and Katsuki snatched him into a hug before he could get a warning from the others.

“Voi! Let go of me!”

Katsuki gave him a big smooch on the cheek and an evil joy sparked inside him when he heard Squalo make a gurgling sound of disgust in the back of his throat. He pulled Katsuki off him by the back of his collar and his lips twitched as he noticed what the blond was wearing.

Katsuki opened his mouth only to have Squalo muffled him with a hand.

The swordsman looked like he was having a headache. “No, don’t explain anything. I don’t need to have any more of Shitty Boss’s kinks to haunt my nightmares. And keep your affection to yourself before Boss starts giving everybody glass induced concussions.”

“Xanxus didn’t ask me to wear this.” He pried Squalo’s hand off his face.

“I don’t want to know your kinks either.”

“Alright boys, stop arguing and come help!” Lussuria clapped his hand to get their attention. “We can’t let little Eri-chan do all the work!”

At the kitchen island, Eri was smearing cream all over the cake fresh out of the oven. Lussuria helped smooth the cream out and squeezed a decorative circle of cream around the edge. Bel leaned over, throwing on sprinkles.

“I don’t think Boss will like sprinkles,” Levi said.

“Ushishishi, the Prince likes it though. It’s colorful.”

Mammon placed a small wine bottle made of chocolate at the center of the cake. Placing a few candles on the cake, Katsuki looked pretty proud of it. Levi took over the final task of squeezing *Buon Compleanno! onto the cake.*

“Buon…Com-Compleanno?” Eri read the letters out loud.

“Yes, it means happy birthday. It’s Xanxus’s birthday today.” Katsuki picked her up and handed her the cake. “Hold it tight, okay? We’re going to give it to him.”

“There’s a seventy percent chance he will toss it right back at our faces,” Squalo said with a shrug and grabbed the wine out of the bag with one hand. Katsuki kicked him for scaring Eri.

The girl held onto the silver platter with the cake tight. "Cakes are for birthdays?"

"Yes, dear." Lussuria grabbed some more plates from the cabinets. "We can get you one for yours too. When is your birthday?"

"...I don't know." Eri looked down at the cake, a little bit of longing in her eyes.

"October 21st," Levi said. "It was in the medical files when I was going over the villain's research."

Lussuria nodded. "I'll tell the chefs to schedule a cake in for dinner then."

Eri spent the walk to Xanxus's office thinking about what she wanted for her cake.

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Xanxus was reading over a file when his door opened. The man looked up and saw his lover had come back again, which was expected. What he didn't account for was his right hand man with a bottle of wine and the little girl Levi picked up from Japan. The girl was also in a maid's outfit and she was carrying a cake.

Even without looking, he knew the others were watching outside the door, ready to run in case he started shooting at everybody. Xanxus leaned back into his chair, observing the large smile on Katsuki's face.

Little bastard was waiting for him with a trap. He should have known hot sex didn't came for free.

"What the fuck is that?"

"Your birthday cake." Squalo set down the wine on Xanxus's desk. "No parties and no celebration like you said but a cake's not against the rules, right?"

"Buon Compleanno, Boss," Eri said quietly and Katsuki helped her place the cake in front of Xanxus. Xanxus hadn't talked to her a lot but he supposed their training of her was progressing enough that she managed to be able to say something without stuttering in front of him.

Maybe she would have some other uses in the field in the future too.

"It's ugly as fuck," Xanxus grunted but he didn't immediately toss it back at them. He would admit that he wasn't in a terrible mood after a good fuck earlier and the brand of the wine was acceptable, decent enough that he could tolerate the pile of sugar placed in front of him. It was covered in icing and cream but some parts were bumpy, plus a bunch of sprinkles that he was pretty sure was thanks to Bel.

"But you'll still eat it." Katsuki placed Eri on the ground and sat down in Xanxus's lap. He pulled out a kitchen knife from behind him while giving Xanxus a kiss. "Come on, you don't have to make a wish but you can make the first cut."

Squalo made a face. "Where the hell were you hiding that?"

Xanxus looked down at Katsuki, who was a cackling mess squirming in his arms. He was also a bit curious. Bel's daggers were small and thin enough that the prince could easily hide a stack in his long jacket or boots but Katsuki's inventory of things he liked to hide varied more in size.

"Don't swing that thing around in my face." Xanxus took the knife from

Katsuki. Honestly, if he didn't know better he'd say his lover was both begging and threatening him to cut the stupid cake. The rest of his men trickled into the room, carrying plates and small forks after seeing that the coast was clear. He glared at them, a little annoyed at the goofy grins on their faces. "I don't want to hear any happy birthday crap. Get a piece of cake and get out."

He stabbed the knife into the cake.

Chapter 43: Chapter 39

Chapter Notes

An action chapter mostly.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

A few heroes gathered in a safe house before the operation on the League of Villains. It wasn't a very spacious place, only large enough to host about a dozen or so of the more critical heroes and police involved in the plan.

They needed to move in on all of the villains' bases at once and capture them, destroying their strongholds before they could have a chance to regroup. All Might felt a sense of apprehension as he remembered his last fight with All For One–The greatest evil that all of the previous One For All users failed to bring down, the uncrowned emperor who terrorized Japan from the shadows for years.

There was no doubt that All For One was evil. He was a cruel man who liked to toy with people, manipulating others into fighting each other or making them succumb to their own inner turmoil. All For One had a way of gathering people, taking them in and turning them into the most loyal of pawns. But he wasn't the only villain in the world who knew how to play that game.

Vongola.

All Might stood by the empty stairway as his heart sank towards the bottom of his stomach at the thought of the mafia. All For One's followers were loyal and they could band in great numbers but they were mostly radicals grouped together in order to complete a stage of All For One's plans. The composition and experience in crime of the group was questionable. Their loyalties were even greater mysteries since it wasn't uncommon for the villain to use threats to force people into working under him. The mafia, on the other hand, they were *professionals.* Especially the Vongolas, their children grew up surrounded by crime and honor swore in blood. Even if they held no military ranks or titles, they were basically a militia filled with troops and troops of specialists for battle and other criminal activities.

Now the two great forces wanted nothing more than to tear each other

down and devour the other whole. And the heroes, maybe even Japan's fate, was caught in between.

"I need to talk to you," All Might said when he spotted the teenager coming down the stairs. Bakugou was not in his hero costume. Instead, he sported a black uniform that bore Varia's crest. A simple black tunic with the double silver buttons and dark pants. There were daggers and grenades strapped to his belt. Instead of his normal short hair, a lock of blond hair was tied behind the nape of neck and in the dark, the cut of fabric around his slim waist gave the outline of his body a more androgynous look. With the pure white mask covering his face, it was hard to associate this quiet child with Bakugou Katsuki, who would announce his presence to the world with loudest blasts.

This boy was a mafia.

All Might didn't believe Bakugou was a horrible child or a serial murderer. He was a teenager, one that the heroes couldn't save in time and found recognition in men who promised him everything the world could offer. It was a classic tale. That was what happened to most children who were led astray. They were lost and lonely and maybe scared, all too desperate to grab onto any helping hand that would reach out to them. No matter the price. Unable to think about the true cost of companionship. Or simply left with no other choice.

Bakugou was just luckier than the rest that the men he found didn't want to sell him or hurt him.

But they were still using him. No sane person should teach a child how to kill. No reasonable man should kiss lips so much younger and inexperienced.

"I'm not disappointed in you," All Might said before the teen could get a word out. "I'm not here to talk about your choices in romantic partners or your connection to the mafia."

It wasn't the right time for that, not when they were about to face an army of villains who wanted to ruin society.

"Then what do you want?" Bakugou gruffed. His voice was distorted with a bit of metallic digital sound. It really wasn't necessary for him to hide his identity when the people who knew already knew but neither side really wanted to make Bakugou's mafia connection some grand revelation that needed to be broadcasted across the globe.

At least, not now.

“I’m here to say that you don’t have to kill Shigaraki.” That was the personal decision that All Might decided on. He could still fight so he wouldn’t let a child carry the burden of murdering another soul. “I know what you think you have to do but that’s not your responsibility. Shigaraki…he is the legacy of my mentor. Maybe we can’t save him anymore but I will stop him.”

It was his duty as a hero and as One For All’s successor.

Bakugou was silent for a second before he shook his head. “You do realize that even if I don’t kill him, things can’t exactly go back to as they were, right? The company I keep determines that and when this villain fiasco is over, your people will turn on me. There’s nothing you can do about it either. No.1 or not…actually, it’s because you’re No.1 you can’t do or say anything.”

A hero can be sympathetic towards criminals of small crimes while still upholding the law but they shouldn’t be openly defending the mafia.

“If you kill Shigaraki, that life is on you.” A proof of his sin before his hero career could even take off.

“What makes you think they won’t try to argue that I don’t have my hands drenched in blood already? One life or a dozen, with or without proof, it doesn’t make any difference.” Bakugou touched the ring on his finger. It was a large and intricate one and All Might had a feeling that it wasn’t a regular ring. Rings to the mafia meant power and status. “Killing All For One is nice but he’s an old name. Most people don’t even know he still exists. Getting rid of Shigaraki will bring peace and make the public feel safer. Defeating the Metal Liberation Army is a major bust of extremists that the media will love.”

He was staring directly at All Might now, red eyes calm as a dead pond. That wasn’t right. It wasn’t right for a child to live in such insouciance, seeing the world through only logic and profits.

“But taking down Vongola?” Smiling, Bakugou took a step towards the older man. “The world will bow in astonishment. They–”he pointed to above, symbolizing all the higher authorities and politicians that weren’t even present in the building– “will never give up on a chance so good. We’re not allies. We just share a common bastard that we both want gone right now.”

“Bakugou–”

“I know you mean well, All Might. You don’t want me to kill and that’s great.” The blond teen’s smile softened, no longer as sharp and practiced but it felt more like a farewell. “You really are the best hero and role model.”

But that was all you are. All Might could hear the unspoken portion out loud in his head. He was a hero and a teacher. An inspiring symbol of peace and victory. Yet, that was all he was to Bakugou. He wasn’t the family that Bakugou would be willing to die for or the man that he loved. His words weren’t enough to change the teen’s mind. It didn’t hold enough weight.

“It’s dumb to be throwing my life away because of love. It’s not right to be falling for empty promises and letting other people benefit from my sacrifices. They are grown men, mafia men, villains who could turn on me or ditch me like garbage in the blink of an eye.” Bakugou’s voice dragged All Might’s thoughts back to reality. “And they will. If something threatens the family and my death is the only solution, they will do it.”

“Then why do you still choose their side?”

“I had a talk with Reborn. Yes, that Reborn. The world’s best hitman. He asked me that same question.” All Might wasn’t surprised to hear that name. The hitman was a legend in the underground world that even his mentor talked about often when she was still training him. “I told him that somebody put their faith in me so I want to prove they weren’t wrong to trust me. And I’m not doing this just for them. I’m doing this because I’m angry. I am nobody’s weakness and I refuse to let anybody use me against others like one.”

The raised pitch in his voice was the only thing that showed his true age. A child. A teenager. Filled with all the bravery in the world and too much pride. All Might remembered how Bakugou was involved in their planning. Vongola didn’t bother sending anybody else to connect with them, just Bakugou, who could call the shots on the mafia’s behalf.

The evidence was the scroll with Vongola’s seal and the purple flames that lit up on Bakugou’s ring.

The old detectives thought it was a myth–just mere rumors or fire that burned stronger than any quirk could generate–a secret of how the mafia clung onto power for so long. But All Might knew the truth, the

fire that burned inside Bakugou was the same kind of power (if not stronger) that he had witnessed in his youth, when he operated out of America and went around the world trying to get stronger.

All Might could feel the ghosts of the previous One For All users sighing inside him. His connection with the past was a fading one but the squeeze around his heart wasn't an illusion. Bakugou spoke and planned with the police and the rest of the pro heroes. He knew where to draw the line, which secrets to keep, and pointed out the flaws of arrangements. Delegating, coordinating, and now talking to All Might with such a clear head that wasn't completely blinded by first crushes or naive devotion.

Nobody misdirected him about the fate ahead or filled him with the wrong beliefs. Not driven by violence, not motivated by insanity, not even clouded by a bit of wishful thinking. He knew exactly what he was doing and what the consequences were. That was a horrible part, because no one would want to argue that he didn't know better or that even if they did, not a soul would believe them.

Everything that Bakugou exhibited took time and effort to achieve. Not to mention for the mafia to trust him this much, allowing the boy to represent them, to make the judgment calls while negotiating with the heroes…it was incredibly terrifying and sad.

There was nothing wrong with a child being competent or even being more exceptional than most adults. It was the why and the how that competence was trained that All Might was more concerned with. When they asked a child to view everything in perspective of the bigger picture, what they were really doing was telling him he needed to kill his childhood. No more nonsense about dreams or what they believed in, just calculations of costs and the goal on a scale. Compress everything into naught, grow up faster just to keep up.

That wasn't the kind of world All Might wanted children to grow up in, not the way of life that he wished anybody had to live.

The blond teen walked past him, ignoring the silence in the narrow hallway. "It's time to go. That's your spotlight."

And the rest of the pro heroes would be waiting. No matter what kind of complicated matter Bakugou was the center of, he wasn't the main focus today. All For One was.

"Boss," Bakugou said into his earpiece, voice sweeter than honey. It was a lover's whisper but there was nothing endearing about his

situation. “We are rolling out.”

2

There was a dead body in the elevator leading up to the main entrance.

It was more of a bloody pulp than anything that still resembled a human form actually. They were only able to tell it was a corpse inside the pile of clothing because of the stench of blood and the stainless steel watch discarded on the side.

One of the patrolling MLA members screamed.

And then reports of other bodies being discovered at the other exit, even the secret escape passage for emergencies, came flooding in across their comms. Bodies, beaten and strangled and electrified, being displayed at each exit like some disgusting artwork.

The men and women gathered in this resort were devoted soldiers and they were trained. All of them knew of death, knew there would come a day where their services would be needed to achieve their high leader’s plans. Violence was inevitable and it wouldn’t be the first time these veterans had done what was expected of them in order to bring about a new society.

But fear still quietly grew inside their chests because this time, they didn’t know what they were facing. Or maybe they did but this wasn’t what they were expecting.

The mafia in the movies were a bunch of gun wielding maniacs in suits. They threaten politicians or work with corrupt police through bribes. Maybe it depicted them killing others, maybe it talked about them selling crime…but all of that barely scratched the surface.

“Re-Destro!” One of the underlings slammed open the door to their great hall. Thousands of people gathered beneath the stage to hear Re-Destro’s speech but now they all turned their eyes onto the man who just barged in. “We have intruders! The outer patrol are all dead and the heroes are coming! They have us surrounded!”

The cement layering the walls bent on its own, crushing down into the core of the earth. A splat of wet noise hit the pavement in the center of the crowd and it caused everybody in the vicinity to move away.

A pool of red formed under the newest body.

Toga knew it was *them* before anybody else could understand what was going on. Re-Destro and the rest of the MLA members were activating their quirks in preparation for a battle but Toga was moving already. They were coming for her. The mafia who killed all of her friends were coming after her too now.

Maybe not just her. Maybe everybody else in this basement was on their kill list too.

Her hand found the vials of blood in the pouch around her waist. Her quirk improved after the battle with the MLA and she learned she could use the quirks of those she loved after she took in their blood. If she used Jin's blood that the old doctor gave her…no. It wasn't time yet. Toga scanned the room, seeing how people were screaming and directing each other into position against the invading heroes. Shigaraki wasn't here. The Doctor said he needed more improvement and took him away.

It wasn't time for her to use Jin's blood yet.

No matter how much Toga wanted to, she only had so much of Jin's blood. The mafia killed her friends, robbed her of the one place that she was starting to feel comfortable in. Toga didn't trust any of MLA members. She could tell as much as they praised liberation, most of them couldn't understand her love either. The League of Villains, even if they were still at their budding stages, were the only people who ever attempted to accept her for all she was. And then the mafia took them away.

They had to pay.

Her body suddenly felt weightless as a strong force pulled her towards the smaller hallway. Red feathers dug into her cardigan and she rolled her body to the side, just enough to avoid the blade coming down on her shoulder.

"Hawks." She dived to the ground. Feathers were scattered around her. It didn't really surprise her that he was a traitor. Deep down, even back in the prison that held her, she suspected Hawks had other motives. But they were short on people and Shigaraki needed a hand. Originally they planned to ditch the wing hero after Re-Destro bowed down but Hawks managed to weasel his way back into MLA's ranks.

"I'm sorry but this ends today," Hawks said but he didn't look sorry at all. Instead, all Toga saw was pity as she stared into the reflection of her ruined face. Her face. All the burns from that man.

Toga's breathing stilled. Maybe people were right that she was going insane. She couldn't even remember the face of the man who caused her so much pain. All he was to her was a great inferno that consumed everything.

"No," Toga whispered, trying to shake the image of the flames out of her head. "It's not over yet."

It wasn't over yet. She still had to get revenge for her friends. Mr. Compress. Big Sis. Dabi. Spinner. Jin. She had their bloods. They were still with her and this wasn't–*can't* be the end.

She won't let it be the end.

—---

"I feel like we should go help them," Basil muttered quietly under his breath. He didn't like working with Varia and he certainly didn't understand why they were sitting around and just idling.

The heroes were fighting down the hill. Smashing entrances, sealing off escape paths, and capturing villains. There were a few higher up members of the MLA who were proving to be tough opponents and not to mention, every other soldier under them was fighting to the death.

"Boss said to wait," Levi said as he sat on the tree branch. He had been remaining in the same position after he killed a few of the MLA patrols and dropped their bodies.

"But we want this fight over with fast. The longer we drag it out, the villains might pull something dangerous."

"Boss said to wait. If you mess with our plans, I will eliminate you first."

There was absolutely no reasoning with the assassin.

Basil looked back, seeing how Lussuria was watching the fight with a pair of binoculars. The sun guardian of Varia seemed to be in a very good mood as he hummed a song and swayed his hips.

"Oh! Levi! I see the big guy that questioned us about Eri last time!" he chirped with a light chuckle. "Hmm, he has a few students–Katsuki's classmates I believe–with him. They are going in strong. He's a little too big for my collection but I heard he's got a nice body under all

that shield fat too."

"What are we waiting?" he asked, resigning to the fact that he might as well not think too much of Varia's weirdness to save himself a headache. Imetsu hadn't given him an order to join the battle either and he knew Varia was leading this mission, which was why he hadn't started arguing with Levi or Lussuria.

"Until the villain girl shows up," answered Lussuria.

"The girl…? You mean Toga Himiko? What does she have anything–" The brown haired teen stopped abruptly. Varia was sent to kill the League of Villains and even if All For One revived Shigaraki Tomura, there was no reason for Toga to be alive. Varia was the best and they wouldn't have left a target barely alive. "What did you do to her?"

Basil didn't believe the girl would betray the villains for Varia. He had been watching the enemies activities and he could tell she hated them, hated Varia with such a passion that she would rather die again than to work for them.

Lussuria folded his binoculars back into his pocket. "Now, now. Don't get so worked up. You'll see soon enough but we have to watch for the little darling to transform. Bad children get punished!" –he clapped his hands together in an overly feminine fashion but his voice deepened dangerously–"If they want to declare war on us, then it's a war we'll give them."

A second later, Lussuria beamed at Basil and his tone returned to the normal, slightly over dramatic and high pitch. "If you're bored, why don't you see if there's another corner that the Young Lion needs you at?"

Nope. Basil was staying right here so he would know what exactly Varia had planned first handed…because whatever it was, it definitely was going to be horrendous.

3

The villains were stationed at two different major hideouts. One at a hospital and one in a private resort in the mountains. It wasn't ideal to split up but Endeavor and All Might each led a team to raid the two places simultaneously.

The whole underground was maze work of interconnected dark tunnels covered with multiple tubes and wires and cords. Nomus, both

finished and half finished products–some still dripping with a slim of chemicals and others dragging monitors behind them–attacked the heroes from all angles.

Miruko was the first to charge into the underground Nomu nest with All Might. They were the fastest with the most mobility out of all the heroes who were on the front line of the raid. Even if this was the first time All Might worked with the younger female hero, he was still impressed by her skills.

“All Might! Get the old man!” Miruko yelled as she slammed a Nomu’s head into the floor. A loud bang resulted and even just by hearing the heavy sound, All Might knew she fully destroyed the monster’s skull.

He rushed past them, not wasting the opportunity she created for him. All Might could see the old doctor, one hand still frantically typing on the giant computer while he used the other to smash a red button on the side of the wall.

Gas sprayed towards All Might but it didn’t slow his steps. All the years of battle had taught him how to fight even when he lost his sight. Before the gas entered his system, he was already holding his breath too. With a single punch, he dispersed the strange green gas and caused a Nomu attempting to ambush him to fly away with the wind pressure too.

“Where’s All For One and Shigaraki?” he demanded as power surged through his outstretched arm. A reddish but ghostly fire erupted from the side and All Might dodged instinctively. He could tell that fire wasn’t normal even if the heat only brushed by his skin. A puddle of melted flesh and brains were dripping from the shelf. The Nomu couldn’t handle the fire inside of it and died after one attack.

The doctor escaped his grasp just in the nick of time, retreating towards the darkness with the help of his chair. A crazed laugh escaped him.

“All Might! You’re too late! The next great era of–”

He never got to finish that sentence. As his chair took him deeper into the shadows, it began to fall apart like something had sliced into it. Before the old man could scream, his scalp and flesh beginning from elbow also shredded off his body. At first it was just a slice of him then his fingers fell off and blood splashed everywhere.

A blade and a trident went through the doctor’s heart from behind.

“Voi! That was my kill!”

“Kufufufu, obviously it was mine.”

Two people came out from behind the thick and intertwined tubes on either side of the escape path.
A young man in his twenties with long silver hair and a dark uniform similar to Bakugou’s. This must be Squalo, the self-proclaimed Varia boss’s right hand that Aizawa told All Might about. He was just as sharp–resembling the blade in his hand–as Aizawa said he was. The other was a teenager in a green student’s uniform that All Might didn’t recognize. He had heterochromatic eyes like Todoroki’s but they were one blue and one red.

But there was no doubt he was also involved with the mafia. All Might would never mistake the eyes of those who were in too deep for saving.

All Might forced himself to come to a halt. He could see the glint of silver just behind the doctor, or what remained of the doctor. His white coat dangled in the air along with pieces of torn flesh while the rest of him was a bloody red mess on the ground. Threads. Razor sharp threads like a spiderweb had caught the villain and killed him.

He expected the mafia to go for the kill. He just didn’t think they would do it like this.

“I killed him, ushishishi.” A third voice, also quite young, resonated from above, somewhere on top of all the giant tubes that contained pieces of Nomus in progress. All Might caught the edge of what looked like a crown moving in the dark but the person pivoted and moved out of his line of sight.

“Stai zitto! Go kill some more bastards instead of arguing.” Bakugou was placing bombs all over the place, exploding the monitors and machines as he went too. He smashed the tube containing Shigaraki, causing a strange blue liquid to flow out of the broken container along with the villain. A foul smell was in the air, filled with the sharp toxic scent of chemicals that everybody else also cursed.

“His heart isn’t moving,” Bakugou said after putting a hand on Shigaraki to check.

Did they get here in time? They stopped Shigaraki from completing his upgrade. All Might should be relieved that his student didn’t have to kill but he only felt strangled.

A horrible feeling expanded in All Might's chest. He didn't believe this. This was too easy and most importantly; where was All For One? That man wasn't here and there hadn't been any reports of the other heroes encountering him at the other hideout either.

Where was All For One?

"Too bad, I was hoping to send him to hell with a personal greeting." Squalo walked over and raised his sword. "Let's make sure he stays dead this time."

No. Shigaraki wasn't dead.

"Get away from him!" All Might screamed.

Lava poured into the room from the ceiling. The ground was quaking and All Might grabbed Mikuro, pulling her away from the falling magnum. All of the oxygen in the room was gone, replaced by a suffocating and painful hot air that burned their lungs. Squalo and Bakugou jumped back as the ground around Shigaraki cracked and rippled.

Everything twisted for a disorienting second but the room returned to normal. No falling debris. No lava. The temperature also cooled.

"Ha…they actually recreated it," the teen with different coloured eyes sneered as he drove his trident deeper into the ground. The space around him was still unstable, misty and foggy like it was trying to become something else. The number in his red eye flipped, changing so fast that All Might could only see a blur of black within the red. "Didn't think you had it in you, replica."

"I had to do something since you all prepared such a grand wake up call for me." Shigaraki stood up, his body looking thicker and stronger than before. The numbers in his red eye were also jumping, changing at a speed that matched the teen's. A bit of blood dripped from his modified eye but he wiped it away without a care in the world.

An illusion battle. All Might could only curse the length All For One was willing to go to. That eye must be how Shigaraki was able to use illusions like the mafias.

"All Might!" Aizawa's shouting came from behind him. "I'll cancel his quirk!"

"Thank you! Detroit Smash!" He shot forward, smashing his fist into

Shigaraki, who managed to block it but the force from his punch still pushed Shigaraki back. The villain's feet sank into the ground, leaving a trail of dents as he got pushed closer to the wall.

Then colorful snakes shot out from Shigaraki's chest, appearing out of thin air and opening their mouths wide to swallow All Might whole or sink their poisonous fangs into him. The flash of a sword and explosions went through the herd of snakes.

"Rokudo! Cancel him out!" Bakugou sent another blast that was supposed to fry Shigaraki's skin but it barely left a scratch of black soot. The villain laughed and up close, All Might could see that Shigaraki's red eye was stuck on the number three.

"I can't cancel the Realm of the Beast! The summoning from hell is real and not just illusions." The teen waved his trident. Ice covered the floor, freezing all of the snakes and they shattered into pieces.

The numbers in both the boy and Shigaraki's eyes started moving again.

Daggers rained down from above while the air twisted again. Shigaraki dodged the weapons and with a shout of command, the Nomus in the room attacked even more relentlessly. Mikuro was busy keeping them away from Aizawa, who had to focus on activating his quirk. More silver daggers came flying from above, piercing into the monsters from all angles.

"Voi!" Squalo and Bakugou switched positions. The blond teen fended off Nomus with his long needle-like daggers while Squalo hacked at Shigaraki and small bombs detonated all over the white haired villain. All Might took his chance and kicked Shigaraki in the ribs.

He went flying, smashing through a series of tanks filled with water and chemicals.

Shigaraki was outnumbered but even now, All For One still hadn't shown his face. All Might breathed in, forcing the nauseating feeling of seeing the ground rippling in front of him away. It wasn't real. It was just another illusion.

"Give up, Shigaraki Tomura," he said as he punched Shigaraki again and again. The young man wasn't staying down and the craziness behind his grin only grew wider.

"No fun in giving up so soon," Shigaraki coughed and he vanished. His

speed increased! All Might went after him but Shigaraki's arm expanded. One arm became two and more fingers grew along the length. Snakes popped out too, slithering down the flesh and going after Bakugou. "He can't cancel a physical mutation now, can he?"

The wave of hands and snakes came down on Bakugou.

"No!"

"Fucking hell," the blond's voice sounded from the ceiling. He was dangling off a broken pipe and he didn't lose a limb but his mask was gone.

Mikuro's mouth widened but she kicked a snake away from Aizawa. "Somebody better explain what is going on with this mission later," she spat but it was clear that Aizawa wasn't listening. The male hero's body jolted as if he had to snap himself back into reality.

"There's no later," Shigaraki laughed as his hand came in contact with the ground.

"Shit!" Squalo cursed and Bakugou jumped into his arms. A shark, covering a light blue layer of energy, appeared under their feet, taking them into mid air.

Upon the first crack of concrete crumbling, All Might already had Aizawa and Mikuro in his arms. The teen with the trident leaped over a fallen tank of glass and onto the back of a feline animal that raced toward the exit. An owl also tailed behind All Might as all of them ran from the decay.

The whole building turned to dust.

"Everybody fall back!" All Might shouted while throwing his colleagues to the dragon hero taking to the sky. "Don't let the rubble touch you!"

He turned around and smashed the untainted ground, delaying the decay from catching up.

Shigaraki's quirk had become more powerful. All For One must have stuffed him with other quirks too and All Might could hear people screaming. The heroes were fleeing, running from the destruction.

The ground was wobbling again. This time it tilted as if to contain the decay within the vicinity of the hospital but All Might knew it was too

late. The tidal wave of the quirk's effects were radiating into the city.

He didn't have time to assess the damages in full because he could hear Shigaraki laughing across the now barren land.

"Rokudo! Use your ring!" Bakugou screamed. "Combine the flames with mine to amplify Squalo's!"

The boy didn't move. He was panting, ragged breaths and a heaving chest as he got into the clear, where the decay didn't touch.

"Rokudo!"

"Sorry, but me is at my limit." The teenager with the trident flickered like an old video tap, glitching as his colors faded. In his place, stood a boy wearing a giant hat in the shape of an apple and dressed in a hoodie. Light green hair and looking like he was about to faint, the boy couldn't be older than seven. His eyes were dead and his knees buckled. A girl with an eyepatch rushed out from thin air and scooped him away before Nomu's fist could smash him into bits.

"Get him out of here!" Bakugou yelled at the girl. "…Fucking Rokudo! He went straight after All For One!"

"How the hell did he find out where the bastard is before we did?" Squalo cut off Nomu's head, looking irritated. "Voi! Hero! Where the fuck is your old nemesis?"

All Might didn't know. He was going back to fight Shigaraki when he heard the statics of his comm come to life.

"Tartarus has been overrun. I repeat: Tartarus has been overrun." It was a different detective's voice on the line. Someone All Might didn't know but he could hear the urgency in their voice. **"There are reports of fire at the prison and the guards couldn't put it out. The head of the attacker claims to be All For One!"**

And then it was a series of reports on smaller riots happening in other places. Prisons mostly. But with each jailbreak, the neighborhoods in the area were also being hit.

"…and Namimori is under evacuation alert. The escapees are all headed towards Namimori!"

Chapter End Notes

I kind of want to get this arc over with so we can get the victoire reveal, lol but patience.

Chapter 44: Chapter 40

They expected the possibility of All For One not being near Shigaraki before the raid started. All For One was elusive and he certainly was like a rat, digging all the tunnels of backup plans after backup plans and knowing how to hide.

Mukuro possessed one villain after another, taking over their bodies and jumping from mind to mind. It helped him infiltrate the enemy's ranks, moving closer to All For One's whereabouts one person at a time. It was an exhausting task but Mukuro managed to find where All For One was physically.

"What a grand nuisance," Mukuro muttered as he checked his watch. Updates about the battles were in his ear, disrupted by a bit of static from the interference of the roaring sea and all the security measures around the island prison.

They called this place Tartarus, as if any of them had any idea what real hell looked like. Mukuro stared at the individual cells and almost chuckled. The outside society was kind enough to their inmates in Mukuro's eyes. It wasn't like they submerged their prisoners into tanks of water and kept them under a state of half lucid dreams, which was what the mafia did. Vindice's prison didn't have many individual cells with beds or these bright lights, just tanks after tanks that they lined people up in like canned tuna. Pickling everybody with chemical sedatives that kept their heads in a fog and body weak.

He would know, since he was in there for years.

The voice in his earphone became clearer. Sighing, Mukuro tapped his mist guardian's ring, feeling the flames lit upon the silver and it turned into an earring on his left ear. The three sharp ends of the dangling jewelry were lit with the dark indigo hue of his fire.

"They did well." Fran was a prodigy in illusions but he was still just a child. A portion of Chrome's powers was reserved to create illusions within herself. The girl Mukuro found most compatible as his host was on death's doors when he met her in her dream. Her physical body lay in a hospital and almost all of her organs were gone. Both Fran and Chrome lacked strong stamina and battling experience too.

But that was something Varia was going to have to work with.

Mukuro felt no shame in throwing the hard problem to the assassins. His task here was more important. The ground trembled while alarms and gunshots ripped through the ceilings. The gates had fallen and someone probably hijacked the internal system because all the cell doors popped open and the convicts escaped.

He got here later than he wanted to. All For One kept his real target hidden so well that Mukuro had to jump through too many brains to find clues of where the villain could be. He couldn't just randomly take over a Nomu's consciousness either, since the modified humans were essentially corpses with no intelligent thought. It would be his greatest failure if he ended up stuck in a broken mind.

All For One brought a calvary of Nomus and he planned to use the escapees as part of his army too. Mukuro watched as the criminals rushed towards their freedom, killing each other intentionally or just stampeding over one another in their adrenaline-filled excitement. There were a great number of them and with most of the professional heroes helping out with the raid on Shigaraki Tomura and the MLA, of course the law enforcement were lacking manpower.

Mukuro lacked the numbers on his side too. He came to kill the king by himself.

But for illusionists like him, a crowd that had the strength in numbers was also the easiest to crush. Too many people meant too many thoughts and too many variables. Who could tell if they were swept in by the moment? Who could tell which thought was their own, one echoed by others around them, or simply Mukuro whispering into their ears?

Riots were a specialty, where violence could be so easily incited and blown up in proportion that men became less than animals in mere minutes.

He hated the mafia but he never said he had no grudges against villains.

Pointing the tip of his trident into the water leaking into the facility, Mukuro grinned. Tartarus, right? If it was hell they wanted, he would show them one when their hope was strung the highest. The first scream came from outside, closest to the water as the bridge connecting to the closest city erupted into flames. Thick wires snapped and electricity slammed into the first escapees, burning them. The rain helped Mukuro, turning the rocks around the edge of the island into

slippery traps and the panic spread through the crowd.

But he wasn't dealing with a normal crowd. The blood and agony-filled screams only excited more of the perverts. The insane criminals were agitated, in need of their fix of death like addicts to a drug.

They want to run. They want to kill. Cowards. Prey. Mukuro stared out of the ruined walls, ignoring how the rain soaked him too. The sky turned darker and water poured from above. Below him, the blood pooled under broken limbs despite how desperately the rain attempted to wash the sins away. *Go ahead, no one is stopping you. Let's party.* One little push inside their heads, one tiny little tweak in their train of thoughts and carnage broke free.

His flames grew wider, spreading and melting into the rain like a fog. The crazier ones muttered about hearing slippery and slick noises tapping against the cliffs, of tides getting higher, and a sense of cold fear ghosted over their spines even as the guards bled out at their feet.

Run. Run.

Something is coming.

All For One lifted his hand and a few Nomus gathered around him. Mukuro could see all kinds of quirks activating around the villain, protecting him. The man commanding an army landed on the ruins just outside of the front gate that was blasted open. He raised his hand, calling for the criminals' attention and when he spoke, it was as if a saint had descended to utter the holy words of a power above.

A god. The old villain was here to revive history. To remake the world into what it should be.

Men and women all chasing for their freedom and purpose. They screamed and shouted after the initial shock passed, hooting at the chaos without much fear even when they saw people dying right in front of their eyes. Hopeless. What a horribly hopeless bunch. They thought they would make it, that some unfortunate fools already paved their way to sweet freedom for them with their corpses. Some were ready to take flight and others would go anywhere with All For One as long as they got to wreak havoc.

Only, Mukuro didn't plan on letting any of them leave here alive.

A giant purple tentacle broke through the surface of the roaring waters. It crushed down on the villains and sent pieces of sharp rocks

flying as more tentacles wrapped around the cliffs at the edge of the island. The land rumbled, quaking loudly as more screams filled the air. The villains beneath scattered while yelling at each other to attack the monster crawling out of the sea.

They thought it was another security measure or some kind of gigantic prisoner that Tartarus kept in its abyss.

Mukuro was having fun watching all the quirks firing off across the chaos. He slipped down the slope of a few ruined stairs easily and looped around the enemies. His body was blurred by the mist, hidden by sheets of rain and curtains of smoke.

“Ugh…help-p me…”

The man on the ground choked on his own blood, gurgling the crimson liquid pooling at the back of his opened throat. His nails dug into the dirt, all coarse and muddy with folds of wrinkled lines that marred his blistering knuckles. Of course Mukuro helped him.

Mukuro helped put him out of his misery.

The rain sang a different tune now that blood dripped from Mukuro’s trident. Harsher and thundering, the melody was disrupted when Mukuro felt the reality he twisted shifting back to normal against his command. Nomus, about half a dozen of them, crawled out of the depth of shadows. There was fire burning along their spines, in the same harmony as the mafia’s seven flames.

It looked like the villains weren’t just using each other or small time thugs as experimental lab rats then. That was fine by Mukuro. The mafia deserved it. It was just another form of evil consuming each other.

“Don’t you think you’re collecting too many toys?” asked Mukuro as he emerged from the mist to stand in front of All For One. “The quality is horrible.”

He waved his trident and the air around the Nomu closing in behind him rippled. The monster’s limbs folded upon itself. It growled but its vocal cords were soon ripped out by the giant serpents that appeared out of nothing.

The villain in his black suit wore an industrial mask that allowed multiple tubes to be attached to his body. All For One was an ugly looking villain, so disfigured and hairless that it was almost funny.

But his manners were impeccable.

“I’m afraid we’re a bit short on time to be picky,” All For One said while staring at Mukuro. “Those eyes…yes, I’ve heard about the success. It really is a pity that the Estraneos couldn’t enjoy the fruits of their labor. We were all looking forward to it back then.”

There was a dark implication behind his words. Although Mukuro couldn’t tell what kind of expression All For One had, he understood that this man must die.

“Kufufu…” The man was trying to rile him up, to poke holes into his calm rationality and boil his head with fury so Mukuro would make a mistake. It was a cheap move, nothing but words but Mukuro’s flames burned higher, licking the sky. “Some history needs to be buried.”

Mukuro summoned for a thicker fog, a mist so thick that no one could see what stood an inch from them. His body turned to vapors as lasers and compressed air shot through him, putting holes into his dissipating form.

“Tricks of the mind can’t fool machines,” All For One stated, directing red dots of laser from his fingertips to Mukuro’s hiding spot. The laser followed the teen everywhere he went and so did the Nomus. Monsters with their skins on fire launched themselves after him, unbothered by hesitation or fear and without being distracted by the illusions.

“That only applies to the fakes you made!”

Appearing behind All For One, the illusionist laughed as he struck his trident into the man’s side. However, he soon realized the texture underneath was wrong–too hard to be flesh–but it was too late to pull out. The muscles under All For One’s suit expanded in size, multiplying into sheets upon sheets of organic tissues plated with steel that trapped his trident’s blades within an intertwined mess. Heat gathered in All For One’s other palm and a hole opened up on his torso, just beneath the ripped fabric of his clothing, spluttering out a poisonous gas.

“I don’t think you have a quirk suitable for me so goodbye.” The man nodded.

A blast went off, blinding everything in a searing white light of heat. Through the settling debris, a mush of red and white dropped next to a broken trident half embedded in the ground. It was a splatter of a

mess, sticking to gray rocks and broken bricks.

All For One lowered his hand and the mist dispersed around him slowly, as if the white fog had lost its grip in this world and a few wet moistures clawed futilely against the hem of the villain's sleeve. He shook it free, shoulders relaxing slightly as his body entered a recharging period.

And that was when the force of a rocket plummeted into him, sending him flying through the other half of the still-intact prison. The villain staggered back to his feet after he slammed into the wall, his nice suit rubbed away by friction and turned into rags.

The mask came off in pieces.

Orange flames lit upon the battlefield. Burning bright and high, the fire couldn't be drowned out by rain and it burned cold as ice. Villains scampered about but a few braver ones stayed, staring at the fire with disbelief.

"All For One–"

A trident wrapped around the nearby prisoners' throats, cutting off their words. The metal of the weapon pressed against them with a crushing force and *snap,* bones became dislocated while the villains went limp with their heads inclined at a weird angle.

All For One chuckled while Mukuro stepped around a villain, walking closer to the fire.

"You lured my Nomus away and now you take away our audience too," All For One mused. "Is the mafia so afraid to be seen like always? I must say you're a lot younger than I imagined, Vongola Decimo. No, I should say: Sawada Tsunayoshi."

The brown haired boy lifted his head. His eyes were calm despite the size difference between him and the adult villain. Where All For One was tall and broad even with his chronic old wounds, the teen was short and scrawny in comparison. Mukuro knew this looked like a joke of a battle. Two kids against an army of villains. It was a ridiculous odds.

"You didn't have to come," Mukuro whispered. "I can take care of it. You're messing up all my plans, Vongola. Do you know how hard it is to accommodate your ambush at the right time?"

A fire that reflected the radiance of the sun burned against the young boss's forehead. His eyes were golden red, ablaze with the same fire that ran through his veins. He raised his hand, which was covered in a black and orange metal glove with an X across the back of his hand. When he spoke, it wasn't clear who he was addressing but there was a finality in his tone that commanded the air in a way that should be impossible for his small frame.

"This violence ends *now*."

As the new Godfather gave his order and his words were spread through the communication devices, different flames lit up across various battlefields across Japan.

Chapter 45: Chapter 41

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

“There are no heroes! Get rid of the police first!”

Battle cries rang clear through Namimori as the freshly released criminals charged through the streets. They ran down the road, charging like a stampede of bulls going wild. Glass shattered and doors were kicked down. A villain smashed his giant hammers into a car’s hood and sharp alarms pierced the normally quiet streets of this little town.

“This is Namimori?” a large criminal hollered with a vicious gleam in his eyes. “Alright, let’s wreck this place up!”

The houses were empty and the stores deserted. It was barely anywhere past noon but there wasn’t a single customer in any of the restaurants in the shopping district. No mother strolled through the park with their babies and no student chatted with their friends behind the school fences. It was a ghost town, deserted by adults and children alike.

The first wave of criminals were struck by the deep silence of a city, finally noticing the strangeness of this abnormally quiet and lifeless town. The cautious ones slowed their steps, eyeing the shops and houses suspiciously while the more daring ones smashed another window or pipe, trying to see if they could force some residents out of wherever they were hidden.

“Where is everybody?”

No answer. Not even a scared whimper or hitch of breath that would signal there was life around.

“Hey, something is moving over there.”

Dozens of eyes shifted, squinting down the empty road until they spotted a small purple ball moving across the walkway. It was tiny, barely the size of a grown man’s palm and the small creature stopped in the middle of the crowd of villains.

“It’s a…hedgehog?”

Small and covered in spikes, a button nose with beady little eyes. Yep. It was definitely a hedgehog.

More of them appeared all over the place. Some perched on tree branches, others scaled the fence, and a few crawled towards where the villains gathered in dense numbers.

“What kind of shit is this?” A large villain pushed past the rest. Their giant body was made of rocks and the orange jumpsuit for criminals hung loosely on them, tattered to the point where segments of fabric hung off their chest like rags. They lifted a foot above one hedgehog. “Just kill them.”

They stomped down but instead of turning the animal into a pile of red mush like everybody expected, the hedgehog expanded in size. Spikes that were no larger than needles turned into the size of industrial beams. Bladed edges stabbed through the underside of the villain’s foot.

A shriek of pain rang clear in the air and it was soon followed by numerous others.

The hedgehogs–now all with their backs blew up like a balloon and multiple spikes that could easily slice through concrete–rolled closer, boxing in the villains. Before they could react, a shower of dynamites fell from the sky.

Explosions rocked Namimori.

“Ha! That’s what you get for trying to mess with us!” Gokudera yelled while lighting another cigarette. Brushing his silver hair back, he stepped on the edge of the balcony and loaded a larger dynamite into the skull shaped cannon attached to his forearm. As the red of storm flames lit up across the metallic skull, a shot was fired. The dynamite speared through air, slamming into the back of a staggering villain with thick elephant skin and another blast was set off, knocking out rest of the criminals attempting to get back up.

The hedgehogs vanished but noticing the chaos, more villains were starting to gather towards where Gokudera was.

“Die! You brat!”

A knife, dripping with the green of poison, came down from behind

the teen, aiming for his throat but a slash of silver stopped the deadly weapon. Yamamoto kicked the villain off the balcony before jumping off too, landing on the street and he flicked his wrist, sending a wave of blue flames to slice through enemies charging at him.

“Hibari!” Yamamoto yelled but received no response.

“He’s gone off on his own. Fuck. I knew it.” Gokudera landed beside Yamamoto too. A vein popped at the edge of his forehead, throbbing as he yelled into his earpiece. “Shitty Hibari! What part of cooperation do you not get?”

Laughter came instead of an answer. Sasagawa’s voice was the one that came through and his friends could hear strong gusts of wind whistling on his side. **“We would extremely be more concerned if Hibari didn’t choose to run off on his own, wouldn’t we?”**

“Not the time, Lawnhead!” Gokudera shouted back.

“What’s that?” Sasagawa screamed even louder but his voice was still drowned out by the noise of bones crunching and concrete tumbling down. **“I have to go! Kouyou is beating me in the number of punches thrown already!”**

“Those two boxing idiots,” grumbled Gokudera as he ducked low and tossed another dynamite behind him, setting off a small explosion that took out two criminals trying to sneak up on him. Diving behind a stone fence for shield, he dragged Yamamoto along with him to avoid the lasers coming their way. “Kozato Enma! How is your side holding up?”

Both Gokudera and Yamamoto felt the answer before any verbal confirmation came. The ground rocked and quaked, with such heavy vibrations that even some of the villains over here lost their balance. On the south side of town, a skyscraper tilted and cars rotated in the air against gravity before slamming back down.

“…We’re good,” Enma said. The other Simon family members were yelling behind him to take down some loose enemies trying to regroup or flee. **“But more is coming.”**

“They really are all coming to Namimori.” Yamamoto looked back towards the mountains close to the town. It was a forest there and as much as the Vongola and Simon’s illusionists tried to divert the streams of villains gathering towards Namimori into more open ground, the waves of enemies seemed endless.

One villain alone wasn't much of a problem but multiplied that trouble by the hundreds or thousands and it was slowly draining them of their stamina. The Simon family's tenth generation were all helping and CEDEF also stationed troops around town to capture the stray villains.

"The Student Discipline Committee already evacuated everybody." Gokudera had no idea what excuse Hibari's people made up and he didn't care. As long as they got everybody out of harm's way then they could deal with getting the lies straight later. Even if he really wanted to be by Tsuna's side (instead of trusting Mukuro to have Tsuna's back), Gokudera "We have to hold the fort here. Let's try to round the villains up and finish them off with a big blast. The sooner we free Kozato's pressure, the sooner he can help Tenth."

Enma's control over gravity and his ability to fly with his flames like Tsuna would make him the best candidate to get to the other battlefield the fastest. However, they needed his power here to hold off the waves of criminals coming after the rest of the Simons and Vongola.

"I don't think any battle plan matters to Hibari right now. He's furious."

This was his town and Hibari would hit teenagers or street thugs for littering, let alone allowing a *crowd* of villains to blatantly destroy the properties and threaten people's lives.

And knowing Hibari, he wouldn't want any help in making sure these villains fear his name.

The mafia stationed in Namimori could all feel the flare of a particularly strong cloud flame erupting to life. Bright as a beacon but with such a gravitational pull that the clouds in the sky seemed to be drawn right in, forming a dense tornado of dark raging storm overtop of Namimori Middle.

"I'm going to bite all of them to death."

2

Pressing a hand to the mic in his ear to suppress the static, a young man with the tattoo of an inverted crown under his left eye yawned.

"Everybody's getting fired up. Such an enthusiastic bunch." Byakuran threw a piece of orange marshmallow into his mouth, letting it melt

on his tongue instead of chewing. The sweetness spread inside his mouth and he smiled, packing the rest of the bag neatly into the pocket of his jacket.

Hopping off the stool, he stretched his legs and turned around. Pure white wings unfolded behind his back while he stepped onto the railing at the edge of the roof. People–both civilians and heroes alike–were scrambling beneath as the wave of decay descended down the mountains and the damages spread into the city. Towers came crumbling while windows became nothing but particles of glass. Dust and soot, the earth rumbled as everything came crashing down and cracks crawled along the pavement, growing fast and vast like vines of weed.

“Hey, that looks like Kacchan’s classmates!” Squinting against the light, Byakuran saw the teens using their quirks to delay the decay. Walls of ice shot up from the ground and strong winds blew everything back.

The screaming and the urgency in everything reminded him of the fun times he (from the parallel worlds that was) had conquering worlds. Byakuran sort of missed a little bit of that action, even if it did get boring after the hundredth or so time. Fond memories of the havoc he rallied in the parallel worlds filled his head as he hummed, observing and thinking about the possible ways he could have used Shigaraki to his advantage if the villain was his underling instead of All For One’s protege.

Too bad. Byakuran had no plans to destroy this world. Also, he felt like he had certain expertise when it came to world domination so he had the right to criticize everything to his heart’s content. All he could say was that the villains might not suck at this game but they certainly do not have any elegance to their tactics.

“Looks like your right hand man and dear little princess didn’t manage to do the job.” The bottom of his boots tapped against the thin metal bar at the top of the fence dangerously. Byakuran bent down slightly, looking at the man leaning against the wall, who had been quiet since the operation started.

Glancing up, Xanxus shot him a bored look. The older man pushed his dark hair back before sparing a bit of attention to the scrambling crowd. He frowned, looking as if irritated by the cries for help. “Shouldn’t you be helping that Sawada trash?”

“This side seems like more fun.” And Byakuran would much rather chase excitement and drama than fight a potato head that was halfway into the coffin. He didn’t want to take the spotlight from Sawada Tsunayoshi either. This battle in Japan was Vongola’s war.

He even left his subordinates back in Italy because they anticipated an attack on the mafias in Italy by the villains. All For One would be an idiot to miss such a huge opportunity to divide the mafia’s numbers. Buckling Horse was waiting there too, to ensure Vongola’s homebase wasn’t left empty with all this mess going on in Japan.

“I know we agreed that this should mainly be the heroes’ raid but so much for a stealthy clean up.” He laughed, knowing full well of the jokes that ran through Vongola’s allied ranks about how the Varia members were all so loud and extreme in their own ways that were unsuited for assassination. But Varia wouldn’t be the legendary elites they were if all that was all they were. “What are you waiting for? It certainly can’t be that you’re scared of fighting Shigaraki and for you to be so patient…” Byakuran scanned the mess beneath and spotted a moss of green amid the crowd. “...That kid. The majority of One For All is inside him. Shigaraki will definitely come for him.”

Distracted too. Drunk on his new success and rapid increase of power, too concerned with the goal of getting even stronger or fulfilling centuries old feud.

It would have been fine if Squalo and Katsuki had managed to kill Shigaraki as planned. They would all be able to pack up and go celebrate early. It didn’t really matter if they failed either because Shigaraki would be coming for his target. The destined battle between hero and villain, one epic showdown to decide the scales of justice and evil. It was their fate as two sides of the same coin and as the chosen ones of their intertwined legacies.

Except that Xanxus would be waiting.

When the villain least expected, when his emotions ran the highest on sweet adrenaline and cruel power, when he was mere steps away from accomplishing his plans…that was when the assassin’s bullet would strike, stripping away all hope and stomping out any ounce of life violently. The Flames of Wrath didn’t just want to scorch a single battlefield, it was going to incinerate whole destinies too.

Peering down at the crowd once more, Byakuran decided to give these heroes working so hard to stop tragedies a new classification:

Collateral Damage. No, perhaps Secondary Targets would be the better label.

Not many of them were coming out of this unscratched. Perhaps the heroes wouldn't all be dead or fatally injured by the end of this raid but a certain percentage of them would definitely not be able to spring right back into their daily jobs or gear up for another big fight against the mafia any time soon.

"You really must be furious. Or should I say that love works wonders in stirring the coldest of apathetic souls?" Byakuran laughed out loud, purposefully teasing in a dramatic fashion with all the poetic suggestions. It was easy for him to contemplate and connect the rest of the dots. Vongola's elites might be involved but these weren't *all* of their forces. The allied families and older generations weren't just for display. Take out the villains. Dwindle the heroes' numbers. Now all the favors had turned and any blackmail lost meaning. Anybody could kill but it took a specialty to know the art of how to ruin others in such a complete and ruthless fashion. "No wonder you agreed to Tsunayoshi's plans. What happens if Tsunayoshi can't defeat All For One?"

"Then it just proves that trash shouldn't be Decimo," Xanxus gruffed in a raspy voice, ignoring Byakuran's first question.

"So much malice in your decisions." Towards both villains and heroes alike, maybe even involving a hint of petty grudge in wanting to test Vongola Decimo. But that was expected of the Varia boss, whose tyrannical and vengeful reputation preceded his other traits. Byakuran wasn't in the position to talk either because if he remembered correctly, he did something very similar in one parallel universe. He waited until the heroes and villains dragged each other to the breaking point, tearing society into a wreck before swooping in to claim control for himself. It was decently entertaining even if he didn't get to play with that American hero of Stars and Stripes personally.

"Like you would have been any nicer?"

Byakuran tilted his head, pale violet eyes squeezed into crescent moons as the grin on his face grew wider. "I would have never allowed that many uncontrollable variables to begin with. I'd get jealous. Treasures belong inside a treasure chest for a reason."

There were so many ways to make a person give up on being a hero without crushing their soul. It was a simple matter of choice.

Xanxus grunted and he rolled up his sleeves. Pulling out his guns, that orange and red fire of his gathering in the barrels.

The green haired teen took to the sky, racing away from the crowd of heroes and evacuees. Smart kid probably noticed that Shigaraki would be coming for him too.

With a blast of heat that almost stinged Byakuran's hair, Xaxnus was gone too.

Alone, Byakuran extended his arms out towards the sky. White feathers drifted with the wind and his ring glowed the harmony of sky flames against the clear blue sky. Light orange, colder and more controlled than Tsuna's, smoldered upon the silver of his ring.

"Now then," he said, "let's do some damage control."

Chapter End Notes

> Hopefully Byakuran and Xanxus's section makes enough sense. Let me know if you have questions
>
> Love you all for reading. Have a great day/night/evening wherever you are (´∀`)

Chapter 46: EXTRA

Chapter Notes

> This is an extra of teen Xanxus and kid Katsuki's first meeting. Enjoy!

The plaza was crowded with people today. There was a farmer's market going on and the shops all opened their doors. Soft music spilled out of the cafes, calling to the tourists' attention with different blends of aroma of handcrafted coffee. Crowds of people wandered through the artisans' stalls, picking up jewelry or fresh bread and produce.

It was an old place, just like everywhere else in this city. Gray stone piled into a fountain and the well carved statue of a woman carrying a jar over her head stood tall in the center. Water spilled from the jar, splashing into the fountain filled with coins that carried wishes. The liquid pooled over realistic folds of white rocks that decorated the hem of the statue's dress. Sunlight refracted off the arc of water from the jar, casting a glittering gold hue into the stream of water.

With the same platinum shine as the kid's hair.

"Here." The boy standing in front of Xanxus lifted the ice cream cone higher. He didn't look like a standard European descendent even in this quirk society and his English had a bit of an accent. Japanese probably, their pronunciation of Ls and Rs in anglophone languages were the most prominent tell.

Ruby red eyes and soft round face, fair skin that obviously hadn't seen much hardship. The blue coat on him had double layer buttons and the rest of his clothing were of good quality but nothing overly expensive. A small yellow bag with an All Might pin was slung over his shoulder. This was a foreign kid from a good household, probably somewhat upper middle-class.

"Get lost, trash." Yawning, Xanxus leaned back into the wooden chair and dropped a hand over the metal handle. He might have a short fuse but it wasn't like he randomly shot up busy markets just for the hell of it. That would be a waste of bullets. He didn't particularly feel like moving either. It was quiet enough where he was, hidden behind bushes and trees decorating the patio of the cafe but still had a great sight of the whole plaza. "Why are you even talking to me?"

Everybody else knew to look the other way when they saw him scowled.

“You don’t look too happy,” the boy said with a small shrug. His gaze darted down to Xanxus’s belt. “And you have a gun.”

Good eyes. But dumb brat.

“The second part of your reason should be motivating you to run the other way.”

He considered that for a moment, thin eyebrows knotted tight together while a frown marked his small mouth. Maybe this question was more than what his tiny brain could handle because he huffed in frustration. “Someone might get hurt. Heroes don’t run away.”

Yep. Dumb ass little punk with no idea what the fuck he was trying to do. “Ever think about how you might be the first one to turn up dead? Also, conceal carry permits are a thing. I could be totally legal for all you know.”

“I think you’re bullshiting me,” the boy said as he gave Xanxus a pointed look. Oh, wonderful. This one had a mouth on him too.

“And that’s the second reason why you’re getting killed. Don’t talk so much crap when you’re weak.” All things considered, Xanxus knew he was oddly patient today. Normally he would have yelled for the kid to screw off but a part of him felt like he was talking to Bel when the prince first showed up in his castle. Sure, Bel was covered in blood and laughing like a maniac while throwing silver daggers around and this kid was offering him fucking *ice cream* but the feeling similar enough.

Something not quite right. Something not quite wrong. Like stumbling upon a key in Varia’s master room that he knew would unlock an important door to the castle. He just had to figure out which one.

The boy sat down across from him and started eating the ice cream since Xanxus had no intention of taking it. “Rude asshole,” he muttered in Japanese through a mouthful of chocolate and mint.

“You’re the weird kid striking up conversation with strangers who wanted to be left alone,” said Xanxus. His Japanese was conversational but not expert level yet. For some reason, Japanese was one of the first choices that Don Vongola added to Xanxus’s tutoring sessions, probably trying to pay some sort of homage to Vongola

Primo, who retired to Japan all those generations ago.

Those scarlet eyes went wide with surprise and the boy coughed. “You speak Japanese?”

A strange mix of awe and relief flashed across the boy’s features. He finished the rest of the ice cream and hopped down the chair. Walking around and completely ignoring Xanxus’s sneer, he tugged on the teenager’s hand. He was a kid so of course his body temperature would be higher but Xanxus still raised an eyebrow when he noticed how hot the boy’s skin was. There was a lingering heat–one that was very similar to the cooling heat left on his gun after he fired–and a whiff of something that resembled burnt caramel.

He suspected a quirk related to fire or heat was involved, probably activated not too much earlier.

“What do you want?”

“I need to get rid of them.” There was a hint of shaking fear behind the boy’s voice despite how calm he tried to appear. The thing with young children was that they were so much trouble, whether it was because they were spoiled and murderous brats like Bel or they were snot-nosed crybabies like the average weaklings.

Glancing up, Xanxus saw two men lingering around the corner of a souvenir shop. They were nothing special, just normal faces that would blend right into a crowd of tourists. However, even without his mafia training, his days in the slums told him these were sketchy figures. He had seen so many of them, organized and efficient with random grabs. Chasing them was like looking for a drop of ink at the bottom of the sea.

“That’s the cop’s job,” Xanxus grunted. “Do I look like a good samaritan to you?”

The boy shook his head while sneaking a peek at the security guards making rounds and the crowd of happy families moving around. “They don’t understand what I’m saying. And no. You look like you’d kick a puppy or smash a guy’s skull in but that’s a good thing to me right now.”

Ha! Maybe this brat had more brains than he looked. It was going to whatever those guys said if the boy went to the cops. Always easy to brush off a child’s screams in public as a tantrum, especially when no one could understand the fuck he was trying to say.

“Where are your parents?”

“At work.”

“That’s some real shitty parenting.” Xanxus had no idea about Japan but to leave their son unattended here, in a country that boy barely spoke the language? Either they absolutely don’t give a fuck about if this kid lives or not, or that they were plotting to ditch him in a “tragedy” from the start.

The boy’s expression went dark with gloom and a bit of tears swelled behind his eyes but he didn't cry. “I need help.”

“Why should I help you?”

“I don’t know,” he stated without hesitation but admittedly confused himself. He shook his head as if that would dispel the confusion. “I just felt like you would.”

“I could be even more of a bad guy than whatever those trashes are.”

“Maybe. But they aren’t coming closer like before when I stand next to you.”

Because unlike this idiot kid, those bastards have eyes and could tell Xanxus wasn’t one to be messed with. Self preservation was a quality this kid lacked and not in the good crazy way Xanxus saw on most Varia members. But then again, a child from his kind of background would probably aspire to be a hero and those annoying fucks never knew when to call quits either.

Standing up, Xanxus walked out of the cafe without caring if the kid followed or not. He could hear the hurried footsteps behind him and angry red eyes glared up at him. The boy tried to grab his hand and failed, after a few unsuccessful tries, he gave up and just focused on trying to keep up with Xanxus’s stride.

The crowd thickened around them as Xanxus turned the corner, down a crossroad leading away from the plaza. He purchased a bottle of wine from a merchant and the kid almost bumped into him as he handed the payment to the vendor, squeezed out of breath by the crowd.

Lifting a hand, Xanxus grabbed the boy by the back of his collar. He weighed like nothing, no more than a stray dog and much softer than those bony animals. The other similarity was that the boy also hissed

at him as they turned a few more corners and up a flight of brown brick stairs. Xanxus dropped him once they were at the top level, where a dome-shaped ceiling covered over their heads and arches of stone pillars encircled the bronze bell. It wasn't a tower. The building was only two stories tall and was probably built much later, just imitating a style to appease the tourists.

Xanxus sat down on the railing, popping open his wine and taking a large gulp. Crowds of shoppers moved beneath them, too endorsed in the street performances parading down the road. They circled right back to the plaza and if he squinted, he could see the two men scrambling around the sea of people, in search of their lost target.

Losers. Can't even do a kidnapping right.

Xanxus curled one knee up, resting his elbow against his knee while he stared at the clear blue sky. Rooftops and buildings stretched towards the horizon. These were Vongola's streets and while it wasn't his department, it did slightly irritate him that people would be willing to tempt business other than pickpocketing or bar fights in Vongola's territory. His father had a rule that nobody touched the children. While Xanxus cared very little about whatever vile motivation drove these men, to think someone was daring enough to try such crimes *against* Vongola Nono's rules? That was an insult.

And Vongla didn't take insults kindly.

He was going to have some clean up work later this week.

The boy was on his tiptoes as he peered over the edge of the stone, checking to make sure the threat was over. His demeanor reminded Xanxus of kittens carefully testing anything new they encountered, filled with curiosity and wonders, with absolutely no idea what kind of hurt they could unleash unintentionally either.

"I'm selling you to some sleazy old fart," Xanxus said in a bored tone. The lies come easy as always. "They are going to come get you any second now. Those two are part of my gang and it's a whole skit to catch stupid children like you who think they are so smart."

Shock painted the boy's face but he quickly recovered, wearing bravery like a mask as he raised his small fists in protest. "Hey! You're supposed to be the good guy!"

"What part of me looked like a good guy?" From his loose tie to his lazily tucked shirt, from the gun to his face and the underage

drinking, there was absolutely no part about him that signaled he was remotely related to anything *good.*

The kid blinked as if he woke up from a daze. Looking around and then back at Xanxus again, he shocked his head. “I don’t know. I just know you won’t hurt me like they would.”

Small sparks emitted between his palms and well, that was one mystery solved. The source of the sugary scent and the heat. A combustion quirk. Don’t see a lot of those around and judging from the spark, a few firecrackers of embers wasn’t all the runt could do. The boy seemed spooked by his own quirk and he quickly clenched his hands into fists, hiding both hands behind his back with his eyes shut tight as if anticipating being struck or yelled at for the accidental release.

Fear and tears. Two things Xanxus hated and had no time for. It wasn't like a sob story could move his heart either. There were so many of the same tale in their world. Dead parents. Dead lover. Dead children. Abuse and cycles of hate. Tragedies became cheap when they happened so often and they turned absolutely worthless when the misfortunes landed on strangers.

Besides, weakness was a sin that Xanxus despised personally.

Xanxus drained another good portion of his wine. It wasn’t bad but wasn’t anything amazing, just the standard commercial red wine on the more bitter side since it probably needed a bit of awakening. No matter how fine a bottle, some good liquor simply needed a bit of patience and aerating before they could reach their full potential.

Maybe Bel gets a new playmate. Maybe Varia gains a new member. Or maybe they will have a new corpse on their hands by the end of the month. Nothing a shovel and some dirt or a fire can’t fix.

He cracked a smile.

“You got a name, trash?”

The boy looked up at him, inching closer slowly as if deciding that he probably wouldn’t die the next second if he did so. His shoulders were still tense like he was about to make a dash out of here though. “Katsuki. Bakugou Katsuki. What’s yours?”

Chapter 47: Chapter 42

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Heroes are only pretending to protect society. They turn a blind eye to those they can’t help and sweep all the dirt under the rug. All of these small filths accumulated into this rot.”

Shigaraki’s mind wasn’t fully there. Midoriya noticed the strangeness in the villain’s demeanor as soon as they came face to face on the battlefield.

He couldn’t describe the feeling but the power in him warned of danger while he was helping others evacuate the city. Shigaraki was coming for him. He could feel it in his bones so he ran, running away from the crowds.

Dressed in rags, Shigaraki's hair was a mess and saliva dripped from the corner of his mouth. His muscles flexed as his scream grew louder. This Shigaraki was different from the last time Midoriya saw him. His body was stronger, no longer bones and dried skin but cladded in muscles. His movement was more steady, each step heavy with determination.

“A weak society filled with trash that’s used to being coddled and a bunch of fakes,” Shigaraki spat, venomous and so filled with hate that Midoriya felt as if he was facing Stain again. But Shigaraki wasn’t as coherent as the hero killer. His speech was broken as if his mind was split. “It’s only natural that all the filth you tried to keep down pushed back. You don’t understand. You can’t understand. That’s the dichotomy of heroes and villains.”

“Voi, shut up! Nobody cares!” Squalo yelled. His sword slashed out in a flash of crescent silver and the ground where Shigaraki was standing split into half. The way this man fought with a sword was different from Stain’s. His strikes were wider and faster, more agile in his fluid rotations but cutting deeper compared to Stain’s– the only other person Midoriya knew was skilled with a sword–slashes.

The mafia. Of course this man was also part of the mafia. Everything made sense after Bakugou explained how Xanxus was an Italian mobster. The people who worked for Xanxus must be involved with

the violent and dark family business too. The Bakugous' silence. Bel's creepy smiles and the strangeness of a teenage intern who didn't need to go to school at a security firm…everything made sense–in a twisted way–if they were professional villains.

Silver knives flew past Shigaraki's head, nearly slicing off an edge of his ear.

Midoriya caught a glimpse of Bel's tiara before the storm of dust from collapsing buildings shielded his vision. The last of the infrastructure in the nearby area collapsed, leveling the field completely. Midoriya could finally see All Might, who dived forward with his whole body weight and the wind pressure from his fist slammed straight into Shigaraki. It was blocked by a force–no, *flames*--radiating off Shigaraki. It was a dark flame with a hint of blazing red that swallowed everything it touched. Only, it was a normal fire that soared high, seeking oxygen. The fire was almost muddy, spluttering embers that dropped to the ground and corroding the dirt like a spill of acid.

"Storm flames." Midoriya heard Bakugou yelling. He rode on a cougar, climbing the sky on steps of purple fire as he charged at Midoriya. "Don't touch that fire!"

Bakugou yanked on the back of Midoriya's uniform, dragging him back by the long green ears. A drop of rain dripped onto the back of Midoriya's hand. When he glanced up, he realized it wasn't rain but the flip of a shark's tail.

Those weren't quirks. It was the fire that Kacchan told them about. He said the mafia had a system of flames that aided them in battle, a manifestation of their wills. There wasn't time to think too much about how it worked or where the weird animals came from. His feelings for Kacchan, their allies' identities, all of that needed to wait until this battle with the villains was over.

"Shigaraki is looking for me. I'm the one he wants," Midoriya said. "I have to go help All Might."

The ember of One For All inside the current No.1 was dying. It was him the villain wanted.

"Then do what you need to do, I've got a different problem coming up." The blond teen pointed down, where holes broke through the ground and Nomus crawled out. These ones were nudely colored but the strange flames covered their body. They screeched, charging after

the scattered heroes on scene.

Bakugou whistled before screaming, “Bel! Clear a path!”

Explosions ran out and tendrils of fire lit up across the battlefield. Chaos screeched a symphony composed of rumbling earth and flames. It was hard to hear what everybody else was saying. Midoriya saw a few familiar faces amongst the heroes. Aizawa-sensei was using his quirk and All Might tackled Shigaraki on the field. The villain struggled, foot coming in contact with All Might’s side and to Midoriya’s horror, the two seemed evenly matched in strength.

Shigaraki had been “fixed”, granted more power and durability just like the Nomus.

Black whip shot out from him, tangling around Shigaraki’s bare skin and Midoriya pulled with all his might, throwing the villain off balance. Shigaraki flew into the air, where the ground was out of reach and he couldn’t do any more damages of decay.

“Young Midoriya!”

All Might’s punch landed on Shigaraki, right beside Midoriya’s own attack. He felt like he punched a wall of iron and Shigaraki still stood. Hatred and undiluted evil radiated off him as his skin, pink and red but not even bruising, burned hot with sweat.

He reached out for Midoriya. He called him *“brother”*.

Something was wrong. Midoriya could see the slight confusion in Shigaraki’s eyes but neither of them had any spare second to think too deeply about it. The air between him and All Might twisted. Midoriya was forced to release Black Whip as snakes with snapping jaws attacked him.

As if finding his target, Shigaraki focused on Midoriya. No matter how hard they punched or kicked or clawed at the villain, he would always get back up. Sometimes he was an illusion, a pile of mud or a fog of mist. Water and wind sliced at them. All illusions but from taste to touch to sight and sound, everything felt too real. Then fire came, embers that decayed almost just as powerfully as Shigaraki’s quirk. They burned bright despite Aizawa-sensei trying to cancel it.

“Fuck, how many did these jackasses make?” Squalo yelled as his sword slashed through a Nomu’s stomach.

“Watch where you’re tossing them!” Bel’s voice came from behind the fallen corpses. A few silver daggers flew across the field and stabbed into another Nomu’s brain.

The mafia were keeping the Nomus away, clearing a corner of the battlefield. Midoriya noticed a pattern now. The reddish ones disintegrated while the blue numbed, one was a storm that chewed up everything in its path and the blue washed a wave of blood in its wake. He couldn’t tell what Bakugou’s purple ones did just yet.

Another Detroit Smash was forced back by Shigaraki’s fire.

A strong gust of wind soared along with the fire. All Might smashed into the ground and his weight created a crate in the earth that caused pieces of rocks to fly towards Aizawa-sensei and the other heroes.

Midoriya heard a cough.

All Might climbed up but his body was deflated, thin and sickly while smoke emitted off his body. Blood dripped into the soil while the battered hero stood in the midst of dust. His hero costume hung off his skeletal frame loosely, the front of his chest drenched with sweat and blood.

“All Might!” Midoriya ran towards him.

“What a pitiful form.” Shigaraki coughed out blood too but his body was regenerating. Cracked, twisted bones returned to their normal places while new skin wrapped around his exposed flesh. “What do you think will happen once the world realizes what you are? Their peace is such a fragile thing.”

The No.1 hero looked up and anything he wanted to say turned into a warning shout, “Midoriya! Behind you!”

Before he knew it, he felt the shove and the sticky wetness of blood splattering across his face. His mentor was above him, sunken eyes and pointy chin, so thin and bony especially with a black spire sticking out through his abdomen. His mouth filled with blood, the hero’s pained expression was all Midoriya could see.

And then the noise of the world faded.

It was a strange state. Midoriya knew Shigaraki was taunting them. The heroes were yelling, regrouping and organizing their next attack. He could see black stuff–some kind of tentacles or spears extending

out of Shigaraki's back. The mafia fought with a clash of metal and fire and explosions. He heard helicopter wings, loud and slicing through the air that was accompanied by threads of denim.

His body moved on its own.

Midoriya jumped over flying rocks and ducked under threads. Shigaraki's quirk had been canceled by Aizawa-sensei but his body was changed. It was hard to tell if Shigaraki could still be considered human physically at this point. The man's body expanded, wounds healing themselves while layers of muscles piled upon each other. Multiple hands were protruding out of him, enlarging into a giant tumor-like mass that could level hills with one blow.

"Enough!"

His punch landed on Shigaraki's face. The man went flying and Midoriya floated into the air, black whip shooting out of him to wrap around the villain's torso, pulling him away from the ground to new height. Midoriya could taste the battlefield even this high in the air. Bitter dirt and metallic blood, the salty scent of sweat filled his nostrils.

"Midoriya!" That sounded like Best Jeanist or Edgeshot, he couldn't be sure. All he could focus on was the laughing villain in front of him. They were high above ground, black whip slashing through the air and newly grown flesh pushing right back.

"Did you think you could stop me?" Shigaraki yelled in a craze. His mind was there, more dangerous and pumped full of excitement from the destruction that he caused.

"Young Midoriya!"

Midoriya saw All Might flying past him. The hero, despite bleeding and coughing, threw a silver tin can at Shigaraki and it exploded. Green electricity–no, flames crackling like electricity–wrapped through Shigaraki, interrupting with his regeneration. His flesh melted before they could reconnect themselves.

"Do not let anger take control of you in battle! Today, we're going to show the world that we are here!"

All Might's hand landed the strand of black whip closest to him. Midoriya adjusted his muscles, feeling winds rushing past his ears as his body was thrown towards Shigaraki. The villain was spasming

from the lingering electricity but a piece of him shot out like a rod, stabbing into the ground beneath to conduct the flames out of his main torso.

Midoriya's fist made contact with flesh that held the hardness of steel. The gears on his gloves groaned, straining as they hit bones. Shigaraki was laughing, his words broken by the strong gusts stirred up by the clash of their powers.

It was wrong. An evil that couldn't be forgiven or understood. Midoriya knew that but as he traded blows with the villain, fighting alongside his mentor against the final evil…he saw something else on Shigaraki's bloody face.

He looked like he was asking for help.

A piece of rock slammed into him from the side, sending him to the ground. Rough dirt and stones scraped his skin raw and Midoriya coughed violently. Air wouldn't go down his throat. His words clenched inside his chest as black whip vanished. There was more shouting, more trembles in the earth that signaled an army approaching. His mentor's blood mixed with his own.

The mafia's fires blurred across his vision, edges of people were frayed as smoke took over the battlefield.

And then he heard a voice. A woman's voice.

"Do you have what it takes to kill Shigaraki?"

He looked back, only to see Shimura Nana sitting on a chair. The eighth holder of One For All sat there with a grim expression, her dark bangs falling in front of her eyes as she leaned forward. There were others, all the previous holders of One For All were seated around him too. He had seen them before, where they sighed and told him about their disappointment in treating Bakugou as he did. He had no right to another's life or their love, no matter how much he thought he deserved it. Bakugou chose a life, one without Midoriya in it, and if Midoriya couldn't accept it, then One For All wasn't going to help him any longer.

They couldn't give their powers to a soul who forced their will on another just as All For One did.

And now they were in front of him again. Midoriya's body was composed of flames and its light flickered across the spirits' faces. The

shadows in this world seemed to be duller, a crumbling meeting spot of floating stones and rivers of memories.

They speak of the same evil Midoriya had witnessed. A tragedy that was Shigaraki Tomura who now threatened the lives of everyone else.

And they asked if he could kill the villain.

Bakugou probably could. The mafia certainly would. All Might? The heroes? Midoriya didn't think the choice would be theirs to make. Shigaraki was so far gone and All For One still absent from the field– no, the greatest evil was there. Inside Shigaraki.

Midoriya could feel the ancient villain's presence, a connection through their quirks.

"I want to save him," he said. This power, All Might taught him that it was a power for saving, for giving hope.

That was the type of hero he wanted to be.

The vestiges lended him power.

"It's over. Nothing can stop me!"

Midoriya's eyes snapped open at the sound of Shigaraki's gleeful voice. The villain's hand descended towards him while All Might struggled to stand about six feet away. The mafia and Bakugou slammed two large Nomus down while everybody else ran towards them. Togata-senpai was the closest, his feet sinking into the ground as his quirk activated.

Power gathered in Midoriya's fist.

One For All–

"Finally."

Fire consumed everything. Inferno's flames lit Shigaraki into a human torch, burning bright as a nova star. Midoriya backed away, his heart almost leaping out of his chest as a rain of fire descended. The fire converged, red and hot and blazing like hell had been levitated out of the earth. It burned away rocks and continued to soar as it consumed Shigaraki's body.

Xanxus stood on a small hill of ruined stones. His dark hair windswept and two guns with the head of lions carved upon them in his hands.

The mafia man grinned, skin pulling against his scars that made lines all that more menacing. “I’ve just had enough of this villain and heroes nonsense. Round it up, trash!”

Squalo and Katsuki yelled something back at him in Italian but smiles bloomed on their faces too.

Xanxus continued to shoot at Shigaraki and the sea of fire grew. Midoriya could only see a vague outline of human arms waving within the light. The air was filled with smoke that burned their lungs, causing everybody else to back away. His bullets were flames and they burned differently from Endeavor’s or Todoroki Shouto’s.

This fire was one of wrath, a hellbringer that destroyed everything in its path.

No wonder this quirkless man had the guts to square up to Midoriya and All Might before.

“Midoriya, are you alright?” Togata-senpai asked.

“I’m fine.” He got up, kicking a Nomu in the face before turning his attention back to Xanxus and Shigaraki.

The flames converged in a beam, landing directly on Shigaraki and the ground sizzled as it disintegrated. The gunshots stopped. When they looked again, in the scorched aftermath of the earth’s crate, there was a smaller hole.

“He’s still alive!” Bakugou shouted.

Shigaraki flew out of the hole, his body a mess of black and red. His nose and a good portion of the skin on his face was gone and a few drops of pink liquid dripped from the exposed wounds on his body. A strong gust of wind as cold as a rain of knives radiated out of his body before Aizawa-sensei’s quirk worked on him again.

They ran, summoning fabric and punching the earth to create shields to stop the attack.

The ground beneath them sloped as if turned into a slide of mud, wanting them to fall.

“Midoriya. Don’t believe it.”

“It’s not real.”

The essence within him warned and Midoriya bit his tongue. The pain forced his sight clear, revealing a normal ground.

“It’s you,” Shigaraki growled and the numbers in his modified eye were changing. His enlarged hand slammed towards Xanxus, who shot at him again.

Xanxus’s grin grew wider. “You should have stayed dead, trash.”

A dagger stabbed into Shigaraki’s left calf and Squalo was behind him. The long edge of his silver sword sliced into Shigaraki’s neck, only to be stopped by a bubbling of inflated muscles and tissues half way into Shigaraki’s neck. Blood sprouted but stopped just as quickly, the mafia moved away as the ground beneath Shigaraki cracked.

“To think the mafia would work with the heroes…how Vongola has fallen.” Was that Shigaraki talking or was that All For One? It sounded more like the latter. “A child as its next leader, aren’t you ashamed of being such failures? ”

“You talk too much.” Squalo leapt into the air and his sword striked down. He missed as Shigaraki twisted away, the villain’s torso bending unnaturally. A gleam was behind the swordsman’s eyes as he backed away with a gash across his right upper arm. “Voi, Boss! This ain’t the fucker we killed before.”

“It’s All For One,” Midoriya said. “He’s inside Shigaraki and taking over.”

The heroes that could still fight and the mafia had surrounded the villain. Shigaraki grinned but it wasn’t him smiling.

“I’ve always found it fascinating how you Vongolas refused my collaboration. We could have this world generations ago.” His face twitched and he held onto his jaw with a deformed hand. “Don’t worry, Tomura. I have this handled. Where were we? Right, it’s not ideal that I have to use this incomplete body but I shouldn’t complain.”

“Are you giving up on the fight with the Sawada trash?” Xanxus sneered. “He’s not dead yet.”

“Yes, young Vongola...but I do not need him dead.” All For One lifted a finger, pointing to the helicopters circling near. They weren’t of Vongola or the heroes and police. “I was going to reveal the mafia’s faces to the world but it seems that my friend at the MLA encountered

quite a bit of trouble. It's fine though, since All Might's pitiful form had been revealed already. The world would know now that this skeleton of a man is their hope."

He looked at All Might, who was standing in front of Aizawa-sensei and the other heroes. The No.1 hero's body was deflated, muscles shrinking as steam rolled off his bloody body. All Might was at his limits.

"All For One! I'm not done yet. We won't let you keep hurting people. What you did to the Eight–" he stopped, eyes narrowing as more blood dripped down his chin. "Why are you attacking now? You never fight without a plan and you don't have enough pawns to toy with."

"I don't," All For One agreed easily as he spread his arms, both healing fast, "but I found new allies. Reliable, knowledgeable, allies. I guess you can say that…I have many *friends*."

Wrap holes opened up all across the field, black as midnight as they tore through the blue sky.

"That's impossible!" Aizawa-sensei yelled, voice strained and pinched tight. "Kurogiri–"

"–is dead." The young man that stepped out of one of the wrap gates was Byakuran. A mess of white hair and lazy expression, the crown tattoo under his eye seems darker than the last time Midoriya saw him. He smiled, all happy-go-lucky and unbothered by the destruction. "Knew the HPSC wouldn't just cremate the body of a teleporting villain but it took some time for me to figure out how to get a quirk working off a corpse. Even I can't raise the dead so let's make do with what we have. Ah, Midoriya-kun and Kacchan, I sent all your friends somewhere far far away. Isn't that thoughtful of me?"

Byakuran tossed a piece of marshmallow into his mouth and licked his thumb free of the sugar.

"You asshole!" Bakugou cussed. A blast of explosions propelled him forward and he was in front of Byakuran in an instant. Explosions went off again but a long white dragon chewed out of the smoke and fire, protecting Byakuran. The two gave chase in the air, explosions and beams of light, daggers clashing against hard scales. Byakuran had white wings, taking him through the sky, dodging Bakugou's attacks as if the two were in a dance.

Xanxus led the other two mafias to attack All For One. Midoriya raced

after them, plummeting through a Nomu in his way.

That was when an army of Twice clones fell out of the gates. They formed a sea of bodies, crushing down upon them like a riptide.

“Toga…” Midoriya whispered breathlessly. The villain girl was crying and so many voices sounded from the pile of villains. They–she–was crying for blood, for vengeance. Squalo and Bel turned to block an attack from All For One while Xanxus shot at Twice’s clones. His fire burnt away a whole mountain high of clones but more Twice came spilling out of the holes and the ones already on the ground multiplied too.

The heroes moved, gathering together in order to not be scattered by the army.

Up above, Byakuran kicked Bakugou from behind, causing the blond to cough as his body fell forward. The young man scooped him up, one hand tight around the teen’s chin. He waved and the large feline accompanying Bakugou slammed into a barren hill not far from here.

“You love fairytales too, don't you Princess? The prince slay the dragon. The princess married true love. Of kings who gained riches or beasts breaking a curse. The heroes overcame their faults and saved the world. All of those stories are boring!” Byakuran yelled happily over the chaos while watching Toga cloned herself over and over again. “Besides, hatred is a motivation to be manipulated. Now that’s a great beginning to a tale!”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you all enjoyed this update :)

We're close to ending this arc and I'm excited!

Appreciate all the nice comments/kudos/bookmarks (≡^∇^≡)

Chapter 48: Chapter 43

Chapter Notes

> Warning: Maybe slight spoiler for MHA manga? Not sure if it could count but still a warning just in case.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1

Endeavor and Hawks were fighting the Meta Liberation Army at their hideout. Ice and fire split the battlefield while battle cries rang out through the chaos. Heroes engaged in their separate battles with the militia trained to kill.

The heroes might have had the element of surprise but they were heavily outnumbered. Enemies crawled out from the maze underground like ants, numerous and never ending. Metal clashed against each other, echoing off the ice and ruins.

Hawks leaned back to avoid the knife coming down at him. When the specialized Nomus started showing up on the battlefield, he saw unfamiliar faces dressed in black uniforms rushing to end them. Fire–not Endeavor's orangey red hell flames–lit up across the field. They burned brightly in a variety of colors, some as bright as the golden sun and the others green as fresh buds. Redder than wine and blue as a river. The colors burned together into a near blinding white as more quirks were put to their limits too.

Desperate heroes were the hardest to kill.

Desperate villains were the scariest to face.

When Twice's clones started falling out of the sky, they were forced to fall back. They didn't have time to be surprised or shocked, all they knew was that they had to fight. Students fought alongside them, choosing to take a stand because they all knew this was the last line. There were cities and people behind them. If they failed, more would die.

But then there was a hum.

A sound resembling bubbles floating through deep seas.

Hawks turned just in time to see a fish tail swimming by but it was attached to a girl's body. She smiled, a mermaid with long blue hair and eyes matching the ocean. As she moved past him, his body slowed, even his feathers didn't fly as fast.

She stuck her tongue out at him as a punch landed on his stomach, sending him towards the ground.

"Hawks!" Endeavor shouted but the mermaid already slipped away.

She swam through the battlefield gracefully and everywhere she went, movement slowed like lava meeting icey seas.

And then the students vanished.

Swallowed by black holes. Taken.

Hawks forced himself to move, to let his wings push him even faster. He grabbed onto Froppy's wrist just before the last of the black hole took her. As light vanished from his sight, Hawks saw a white haired man with a crown shaped tattoo under his eye behind the mermaid girl. The man smiled, mouthing a cheerful "goodbye".

Hawks's vision blurred and the next thing he knew, he was on an island with the rest of the hero students. It looked like an island and smelled like one too. Salty breezes licked his feathers while he tasted sand in his mouth when he tried to speak. There was a stone inside his stomach, weighing him down as the cold air blew through his air. His movements were sluggish as he tried to stand, feeling as if everything was off balance. He didn't have time to do a head count because the sky was ripped open again, Twice clones spilling out by the hundreds and thousands.

"Everybody beware! Don't get split up!" he shouted. He could fly back to the main battlefield by himself if he knew the direction but he couldn't just leave the kids here.

They were more competent than he anticipated but everybody's stamina would run out at this rate. Toga was furious, using her deceased friends' blood to their fullest. The only good thing was that she could only use Twice's quirk along with her own, not the other villains'.

Still, it was hell of a battle.

The blonde villain girl screamed hatred. Rejected by the world,

abnormal and unloved, she yelled and snarled and bit and stabbed, intense emotions so filled with anger. A blade sliced across Hawks's chest as he shielded a student. There was too much chaos and everybody–friend and foe–turned into a whir of colors and fabric brushing against each other.

"Hawks! That's not me!"

The teen behind him smiled, skin melting as a piece of rock was smashed into Hawks's head. Blood spilled down the hero's face and his body swayed. The pain exploded in his head while he swung his feather-blade into the clone, slicing it in half.

Through the blood loss and between fending off another clone he caught a glimpse of Uraraka running towards Toga. The two girls were in the air, floating higher to where Hawks couldn't reach right now. His feathers were spread thin, helping students whose movements remained a bit sluggish.

The blue of the mermaid. Everybody who touched it slowed down and its effects were lingering.

A burst of heat exploded on the left then it was followed by ice. Todoroki. His flames burned cold, a perfect balance of heat and cold. Drips of water rained down from above.

Then Hawks felt his tired body levitating.

Twice's clones also floated. Everybody's feet went off the ground, leaving gravity behind.

A quirk had evolved in the midst of battle.

His feathers came back to him, soaked with the blood of two girls flying higher above. One of the Twice clones knocked his goggles off, sharp elbow slamming Hawks between the eyebrows and nearly sending the hero's world into darkness. Hawks hung on, biting his tongue to keep himself awake.
Toga stuck a knife into Uraraka but both of them were smiling. Their voices were dispersing along the winds, spread too thin to be heard but the rest of the clones quieted down, no longer screaming about killing them all.

The girls were on the ground first while the rest of them were slowly lowered back down safely. The clones didn't disappear but they stopped attacking, crying and features twisted between a morph of

Toga's feminine features and the original owners she took blood from.

Toga was naked, her body still changing back to her own as she stood over Uraraka's bleeding form.

"Ochako!" Her friends, those who could still move at least, ran towards her.

They stopped just before the two girls, wary of the villain because she was so close. Hawks felt hands on him, supporting him up as the boys of 1-A helped him to his feet.

Toga wiped her tears away with the back of her hand, opening her mouth to speak. "I–"

A colorfully yellow snake suddenly draped over her head, its mouth opening wide in front of her. It lounged at her, fangs digging into her shoulder.

Toga screamed but soon blood spilled out of her mouth. She coughed, more red dripping down her chin and as if setting off a chain reaction, the clones suddenly all started vomiting blood too. They melted, disappearing because Toga could no longer control the quirk. No one knew what was going on or how to help. It was different from when she was trying to kill them. They could stop a villain or out of control vehicles or even go against natural disasters but they couldn't stop someone's body from killing itself.

Hawks shutted his eyes to avoid the blood spewing towards him and when he looked again, Toga was on the ground and there was a man walking towards them.

He was a slim man with a brightly colored mohawk. Dressed in a black uniform and sunglasses, this must be one of the mafia sent to help them. Hawks remembered catching a glimpse of him on the other battlefield now. Had he been here the whole time?

"Alright, good job! Gather around now, everybody!" he waved dramatically, voice pinched tight and high like a mother hen calling for her chicklings. The elaborate ring around his finger shined brightly, and a peacock appeared beside him. The bird's tail fanned out majestically, shining like a miniature sun.

When the light reached them, the warmth was soothing. It brushed over their wounds and bruises began to fade while cuts sealed themselves. Uraraka's breathing turned even as her friends laid her on

her back properly.

Only Toga's chest remained still. There was no rise or fall, not even a tiny hitch of breathing that indicated she was still alive.

Shaking from fatigue and whatever side effects there were from the mermaid's attack, Hawks placed a hand on the side of the girl's throat.

There was no pulse.

He looked up but before he could speak, the man hugged him as if they were long lost friends who hadn't met in years.

"You poor thing, the rain flame is still slowing down your functions. Don't worry, I'll take good care of you."

Hawks gagged. He couldn't speak, not with the shock of electricity delivered straight into his stomach. It zapped his nerves, not excruciatingly painful but still strong enough to make him see white and feel his consciousness slipping. The hard edge of the metal pressing against his abdomen marked the outline of a stun gun hidden from view of the students.

"I'm sorry about the villain girl. She's gone. I heard she was locked up for quite a while and the Nomus we fought earlier all had different levels of modification…poor, unfortunate babies…Who knows what they did to her?"

No. No. It wasn't the HPSC. It wasn't the villains either. Hawks knew because he read the files and he was the one that infiltrated the League. He got her out of the prison and he was with her most of the time while Shigaraki and the rest of the criminals devised their plots. Hawks would swear it on his life.
Toga was fine just moments ago. She was hurt and tired from battle, might be on the last piece of her sanity but she was alive.

And the mafia didn't want her to stay alive.

Toga was the only witness left who knew how the other League of Villains members were murdered.

He grabbed the man's arm, trying to get free but strength slipped out of his numb body. Calling to his feathers, he needed to get them moving, to let the children know the mafia was plotting something else.

A grin appeared on the man's face as he lifted Hawks up. He was taller than Hawks, smiling with sharp teeth and eyes unreadable behind thick shades.

"It's alright. I'll make sure the children get home safely. We're on the same side after all."

Then darkness took Hawks by the reins.

—--

When the last of Twice's clones melted into the pools of blood on the ground, Levi pulled out a megaphone. He yanked Basil out of battle by the back of the teen's collar and they flew into the air on the back of his box animal. The torpedine's tail flicked through the air, dusting any enemy trying to come near with the green of lightning flames.

"What's going on?" Basil's eyes widened as he surveyed the battlefield. Both the heroes and villains were stunned, mechanically reacting to Nomus or dodging attacks as they watched the tsunami of clones left a wave of blood that soaked the ground red.

"Dr. Shamal's virus." Levi tilted his chin proudly. "You really think Varia would make an amateur mistake of letting an enemy live through a raid? Our orders were to annihilate them."

Them. Not just the League with the ragtag group of villains. *Them,* as in all that was dark and vile behind Shigaraki's little group.

They were Varia, there were no loose ends under their plans. Why only eliminate pawns when it was the hand behind these puppets they should cut off? The villains came after one of their own. These idiots thought they could touch a *Vongola* and just lose a few unimportant pieces? No. That wasn't how Varia worked.

CEDEF was good on their intel. They were able to find out that the League might be related to All For One, an old villain that had plagued Japan for generations. Xanxus and the rest of Varia had been suspicious since hearing about the USJ attack too. UA might not be Vongola but their defenses weren't just made of flimsy paper and glue. For hooligans to be able to pull off that stunt, they had to have more than courage.

They were the mafia, when suspicious, they planned.

Since the criminals loved plots so much, Varia decided to send a

Trojan Horse back as a gift. It didn't cost much anyways. A few grands in a suitcase for one mosquito carrying the specialized virus.

"Listen up, liberation whatevers! If you want to live, you will put down your weapons now," Levi said into the megaphone for all to hear. "You have been infected by a virus. If you don't want to die like the clones, you will stop resisting. Heroes! Start arresting their asses!"

At the drop of his voice, the people below stared up at them in horror when realization finally settled in.

———

Back in Namimori, Mammon announced the same thing to the villains invading the town. Not all of them were liberators or even brave criminals. As soon as they saw the waterfall of blood and heard the eerie whisper of doom beside their ears, many criminals crumbled to the floor, shaking and sobbing about how they don't want to die.

Others bent over a bush, hurling out their guts while their weapons dropped to the ground.

Gokudera heaved, panting ragged and uneven. Sweat rolled off his forehead as he leaned against the wall.

"Is that true?" he asked the baby illusionist in Italian.

"Of course not. A transmittable virus is too hard to control." Mammon pulled the hood of their cloak down further. "But the shock value and the mass hysteria is good enough."

"This is going to be hell to clean up," Gokudera muttered as he squinted against the light. Someone just vomited over the sign outside of Yamamoto's dad's sushi place.

Yamamoto leaned down, he was also tired but he didn't let go of his sword. Laughing, he "At least it looks like this side is near a wrap…if Hibari is willing to stop that is."

They could still occasionally hear screams or felt the ground vibrate.

"We can start roping everybody up." Gokudera frowned lightly as he paused.

"What's wrong?" asked Yamamoto when he noticed his friend tensing up.

“This whole thing playing out and those villain clones…that teleportation quirk…Varia killed the League of Villains. They shouldn’t have the clones or the teleportation anymore,” Gokudera said and he gritted his teeth, chewing down hard on the cigarette in his mouth. “Are you actually Mammon? What did Xanxus omit to tell the Tenth?”

Mammon lifted a small grin as their body started dissipating into the air. “How much are you willing to pay to find out?”

2

Midoriya dodged Shigaraki’s attack in mid air by twisting his body.

The pressure from Shigaraki’s punch scraped past like a blade. The villain’s attacks were getting more and more rapid, stronger too. Shigaraki’s decay might have been canceled by Aizawa-sensei but now that All For One’s mind was partially involved, the criminals changed their tactics. Shigaraki was learning on the field, evolving more sophisticated attacks as he merged his other non-cancelable quirks with his illusions.

Bakugou and Squalo were fighting Byakuran. Swords and daggers clashing into scales. The flames burned high around them, mixing with the smoke of explosions.

Midoriya found himself caught between the mafia and Shigaraki’s battle, finding openings while listening to the essences within him about how to fight better. The quirks of the previous One For All users were opened to him now. The powers stretched inside him like lava expanding out. His skin burned hot and the battle turned more intense. His senpais arrived on the scene, Hado and Amajiki clearing away a path for Togata to attack Shigaraki. The other heroes were doing their best to help All Might hold off the Nomus and Twice clones crawling about. They needed to protect Aizawa-sensei too.

The longer this fight dragged on, the more Midoriya understood why Xanxus was dangerous. He was strong even without a quirk, much stronger than any of the villains Midoriya had defeated so far.

And he didn’t rely purely on brute strength either.

It wasn’t a coordinated attack if they were talking team strategies. Xanxus’s fire burned through rocks and Nomus and enlarged hands. His shots seemed random or filled with reckless anger but the attacks were always aimed at where the villain was most vulnerable or

difficult to avoid.

He was trying to wear Shigaraki's regeneration down.

Head. Heart. Spine. Xanxus was aiming to kill with every shot, testing if there was an Achilles's heel on the villain.

Every quirk had its limits. Shigaraki couldn't regenerate fast enough under the rapid fire and Midroiya's attacks. Bel would throw in daggers tainted with the flames of decay when he caught a chance. They took Shigaraki's sight and hearing, burning his skin or cracking bones to force him to rely on additional quirks or temporarily lose one of his senses.

But this couldn't go on forever.

"The bunch of you…like flies…Shut up, Sensei!" Shigaraki swayed, knees straightening stiffly as he held onto his head, trying to maintain control.

Then he vanished.

"Out of the way, Shitty Shark!" Xanxus barked and he fired a shot backhanded. The red of his flames scorched a strand of silver hair.

"The fuck, Boss!" Squalo screamed back but soon, the rest of his angry shouts were silenced as they located Shigaraki a few feet behind the swordsman.

There was blood on the ground.

Black flame engulfed Midoriya's field of vision. Even from this far, Midoriya could tell it wasn't any normal fire. It didn't carry the same kind of mesmerizing vitality as the other mafia flames either. The fire was cold and heavy, burning in the color of strange ink as if shadows had been lit up.

And it took All Might's left leg.

The older hero grunted before he fell, both the blood loss from the previous injury to the depletion of his stamina adding onto the pain of being burned by supernatural fires.

"All Might!" Midoriya screamed.

Squalo swore as he landed at All Might's side, blue fire trying to slow the burn of black flames. Xanxus shot at Shigaraki, whose body was

enveloped in the dark fire.

“What is that?” someone yelled across the field.

“That’s the Flame of Vengeance! Don’t touch it!” Bakugou shouted back as he untangled himself from a close range wrestle with Byakuran. The clones swept over him as he descended through the air, blasts of explosion blocked by the clones’ bodies.

Burning. Burning. Everything was burning so bright.

“...The end of an era!” the villain laughed hysterically. There was no differentiation between All For One and Shigaraki now, only their maniacal laughter rang throughout the battlefield. He was talking a lot more but Midoriya stopped listening.

The green-haired teen’s body shot forward, spearing through the enemy line and black whip lashed out. Dozens of tendrils covered in green electricity pulsed violently, whipping towards the villain. Shigaraki grabbed one of it and yanked, uncaring if the rest pierced the layers of muscles inflating over his back.

Midoriya slammed into the ground. Leaping up, he suddenly saw something weird amongst the sea of clones. They were melting. Did Toga reach her limit? No. That wasn’t right. The clones weren’t disappearing, they were losing their shapes as if they couldn’t control themselves any more.

Bakugou emerged from behind some rubble. He was alive, battered and out of breath but alive. As Shigaraki kicked Squalo away and lifted All Might off the ground for one final blow, Bakugou pulled out a gun and his shot was accompanied by Xanxus’s fire. It reminded Midoriya of how Bakugou took out the Nomu back at USJ. Another piece of proof that Bakugou had been involved with the mafia for a long time.

But fire couldn’t stop Shigaraki. They all knew that.

Midoriya ran towards the heat, wanting to snatch All Might out of danger’s way but he felt a force plummeting into him from behind. A foot was on the back of his head, forcing him into the dirt.

“Stay,” Byakuran said coldly. “This is the good part.”

Holding All Might up by the neck with one hand, Shigaraki raised his free hand and his limb multiplied, turning into a shield against the

fire. Only, this fire didn't burn. Midoriya didn't smell the scent of burnt flesh as he forced Byakuran away from himself. There was a noise of retching from afar, where Bel caught a greenish-blue haired boy by the back of his shirt as the child threw up while passed out.

When he turned his head, Shigaraki was screaming.

"What did you do?" Snarling, his features were twisted as if someone had turned him into clay and invisible hands were reshaping him. His mouth drooped while his stomach bulged, the wounds on him vanished but new ones appeared then disappeared. Layers of muscles deflated and protruded as if there was something trying to escape. His flesh wasn't his anymore and he was forced to drop All Might.

Midoriya stole All Might back in a split second, holding onto his mentor. There was still a heartbeat on All Might, low and slow but it was still there.

Bakugou lifted a grin, his right arm was mangled, bent unnaturally but his smile still split wide. "Rewinding you."

Rewind? But that wasn't Bakugou's quirk. Midoriya didn't have time to think.

Shigaraki's body was turning back into something more human-like. His muscles slimmed but all of his injuries were gone, his physique returning to what it was like when he attacked USJ. A pillar of flames shot towards him, tangling with the black fire still burning on his body. Shigaraki's eyes were normal too now, both red and bloodshot but normal. There were no more numbers within either of them.

"Byakuran!" Shigaraki seemed to have realized something. His head snapped towards the mafia and a hand reached out.

He didn't have a hand where there should be one.

White Dragon coiled around Byakuran's shoulders and there was a hand in its mouth. Blood dripped through the cracks of sharp teeth and onto the ground. Wings retracted behind Byakuran's back as he sighed. "What did I tell you? Hate is a great emotion to be manipulated. Both yours and the blonde girl's. Body modification isn't so fun when you have to reverse it, isn't it?"

Shigaraki's mouth lifted into a sneer but it twitched as if two consciousness were fighting over how to respond. His deadly glare scanned over the mafia and Midoriya and All Might, venomous as a

serpent preparing to kill.

“I’ve underestimated the Omerta it seems,” All For One spoke through Shigaraki’s lips. “You mafias and your conde of honor, how willing you are to remain loyal to another.”

“I wouldn’t call it loyalty,” Byakuran clacked his tongue. “Think of it as a game and we really don’t like people breaking the rules.”

As Byakuran laughed, a thick silver chain flew out of nowhere, trapping Shaigaraki. It wrapped around the villain’s neck, pulling so tight that it pressed into his skin and then the length of the chain went around his body, restricting his limbs.

There was a man dressed in a black trenchcoat not too far away. His hair was long and wavy while his whole face was wrapped in white bandages. No part of his skin was showing and he dipped his top hat towards the mafia.

“...Vindice,” All Might whispered breathlessly in Midoriya’s arms. The essences inside the teen also talked, talking about the avengers within the mafia, the guards who governed a careful balance amongst the mafia world. “I thought they were a myth.”

All Might coughed violently. He forced himself to sit up but he couldn’t hold his muscular form anymore. Thin as a branch and sunken cheeks, the man whipped blood from his mouth as shadows painted under his eyes.

“Why is Vindice taking Shigaraki Tomura?”

“He broke our laws,” the Vindice explained with a voice like midnight fog, so filled with icy chills. He reeled the chains in, dragging Shigaraki towards him as shadows expanded out behind them. “This black fire is the one of the night, it is ours to govern.”

Something about that sentence sounded wrong but before Midoriya could voice a concern, Xanxus shot Shigaraki’s good hand. It was a normal shot, no Flame of Wrath involved but it blasted off two of the villain’s fingers.

But Shigaraki didn’t scream this time. His eyes bulged as he glowered at the crowd surrounding him, what remained of his nails scraping against chains as blood smeared the rest of the metal. When he smiled, it was All For One and all his evil grinning back at them.

“You think you’ve won? Young Vongola can’t stop me!”

“Maybe that trash can’t kill you now,” Xanxus echoed easily. Sweat rolled down his neck, vanishing underneath his collar. There were stinges and cuts on his uniform but he stepped over pools of blood to stand beside his men that gathered around Kacchan. “Nobody ever said anything about the future.”

With that, Shigaraki got dragged into the shadows, never to be seen again.

3

Mukuro dodged monsters attempting to chew him into pieces. The things chasing him had a man’s face but their features were disproportionately strange, with enlarged teeth the size of doors. They didn’t have legs or even a torso, making them appear like floating heads as told in the old spooky tales.

All For One’s hands dug into walls, preventing himself from getting blown away by the shockwaves from their battles. He had been taking quirks from criminals, merging them into powerful moves one after another. Compressed air and enlarged fists, canons added to his palms and stones attacking according to his will. The villain’s legs deconstructed, splitting into tentacles that could pierce concrete as easily as a spoon through whipped cream.

“What’s wrong, Vongola? You’re slowing down!”

The wall next to Sawada exploded and All For One’s punch landed on his side, sending him to the ground. Rain poured down in the bucket full, soaking everything and making their surroundings hard to see.

Mukuro caught a glimpse of brown hair through the howl of gales and rain. Spitting out blood, he coughed as the water drenched his shirt and the fabric stuck to his flesh like a layer of dead fish skin, cold and slimy to the touch. Then he heard a boom as if a canon was shot.

Pink smoke covered the area where Sawada went down.

When the pink smoke was washed away by the wind and water, a white cape appeared. Gold buttons and polished suit, all of it went to waste under the tempest that brewed. The man standing in the crate that Sawada created wiped a hand over his face, brushing the water away. He was taller, still lanky but spine much more erected in calmness despite landing in a battlefield.

Mukuro almost laughed when he understood what was going on.

“...This is karma getting back at me for using my past self,” the man muttered before looking up, eyes burning orange and gold like a hearth trying to chase away the cold of the rain. He met Mukuro’s laugh with half of a polite smile, no trace of any fear or anxiety from his younger self. Brown hair slicked to his forehead but his gloves gave off a glint even under the gloomy clouds. His gaze landed on All For One. “Four minutes and thirty seconds. Let’s end this.”

Flames lit up across the X on the back of his gloves as his hands moved into position. The fire burned hotter and brighter than any sky flame Mukuro had ever seen before. Vongola Decimo sighed, expression merciful against the blinding white heat instead of bloodthirsty.

“X-Burner,” he sighed.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, that's all the big fight action scene.

Next chapter we get to wrap up this arc!! Yay!

Chapter 49: Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

1

Bakugou Katsuki was nowhere to be found after the battle.

Midoriya sat in the hospital bed, listening to the commotion from outside the window. The press gathered beneath, surrounding the hospital like eager fans waiting for the American Super Bowl. His classmates were found with Hawks on an uninhabited island. Exhausted, battered, and confused but all of them were alive and would heal.

The heroes who could still move started to clean up and scavenge the ruins for possible civilians who got caught in the crossfire or stray Nomus. Most of the experimental data from the Doctor had been destroyed. Gran Torino was seeing to that not a piece of it remained on this earth personally.

All Might was rushed to the hospital and he had just stabilized after the doctors finished working on him. Midoriya wasn't in any state to be running around either since his muscles were sore with pain and the wounds he sustained needed time to heal.

A few of his classmates came by, telling him about how the others were doing during their recovery and about the clean ups the police and every able-bodied emergency personnels were taking care of. There were still criminals on the loose to catch too.

"What happened to All For One?" Midoriya asked.

Iida sat down beside his bed while Todoroki sat at the edge of his bed, careful to not touch Midoriya's dangling broken foot by accident. Funny how that worked. The pain from fractured bones or injuries only started to eat at the green haired teen after the battle. He didn't even know he was this hurt while he was fighting Shigaraki.

"Somebody took him out," Todoroki said, sounding unsure. "I overheard my father on the phone. It sounded like someone fitting Sawada Tsunayoshi's description was the one fighting him. And that guy who showed up during the Cultural Festival. The one with the

pineapple hair? He was there too."

Midoriya's mouth hung open. "But–No, wait. Is Sawada related to the mafia too then?"

It couldn't be. The brown haired boy had been timid and kind and so easily scared…so easily scared? Would a truly cowardly person run towards villains when their friend was in danger? He escaped the League with Bakugou. He was the one the rest of his friends listened to.

Sawada stopped Midoriya from attacking Bakugou in the park.

It was as if some kind of fog had been lifted from Midoriya's mind. He had been so consumed by the emotions he had for Bakugou back then that he didn't think too deeply about the inconsistencies in Sawada's group. While he mopped and lamented, crying over the woes of a heartbreak, he completely ignored how laid back Yamamoto was. How Gokudera kept stopping himself from saying certain things, how there were so many unrelated children under the same roof. Hibari, who defeated a Nomu without using a quirk. The older boxer who talked about fighting techniques as if he really had been in battles outside the ring. Sawada's other friends conversed with Bakugou easily but they also respected Sawada to an oddly high degree.

A leader.

"Namimori, didn't a lot of criminals go to Namimori?" Midoriya asked in a hurry.

"They were defeated by the time the cops and heroes showed up. It's said that Hibari guy did a lot of damage. Some of the other townspeople also fought back, it seems." Todoroki shook his head. "That's all I know. Sorry."

His friends had to leave to rest. While Iida and Todoroki could move, they weren't at their best either. Burns and exhaustion, the depletion of stamina and release of tensed nerves cladded over their features like a veil of shadows.

Midoriya watched them go and he leaned back into his bed, watching the clouds drift past outside the window. It was a bright day outside, with sky as blue as the ocean and birds chirping. The voices inside him had been quiet, probably to give him some sense of peace while he healed.

He wondered where Bakugou was right now.

Maybe with Xanxus, sharing a victorious kiss. A sourness spread within Midoriya, not of jealousy or rage this time but it still left his mouth with a horrible aftertaste. He still thought Xanxus wasn't right for Katsuki but that wasn't his choice to make. It was Katsuki who got to choose his own future.

Maybe they would tell the Bakugous that their son died honorably in battle. Maybe UA would mark it as such, so that Bakugou Katsuki wasn't marked as a traitor in the hero's books.

"Young Midoriya."

Someone knocked on his door. All Might came in on a wheelchair pushed by Nighteye. The latter had a stern face naturally but today, the reflection from his glasses didn't seem as cold.

"We got you some food." All Might pointed to the bag by the handle of his wheelchair. There was congee inside, seasoned with a bit of salt for flavor.

Midoriya perked up. "All Might, how are you feeling?"

"I'm good." All Might coughed but he waved his hand when Nighteye tried to pass him some water. "We have something important to tell you."

Clearing this throat, the hero was thin and frail. Midoriya wasn't unfamiliar with All Might's sickly form. He knew those sunken cheeks and understood how the man's skin dangled over bones. But today–because of his injuries and all the surgeries–he was a lot paler, almost like a ghost.

"This information was obtained through great difficulty by a surviving staff of Tartarus. They said it was Vongola Decimo who finished All For One."

"Sawada Tsunayoshi?" Midoriya's mouth hung open. He couldn't imagine the brown haired boy being the head of a global criminal kingdom. Did he talk to the Godfather unknowingly before?

All Might and Nighteye had an odd look on their faces. "The thing is, the staff saw a man in his twenties fighting All For One. All For One referred to him as Vongola Decimo. The staff can't remember his face but they are certain it was a man."

No. Something was wrong.

Shigaraki. Or Shigaraki controlled by All For One mentioned a child at some point. Midoriya's head hurt. Was he imagining things? His memory felt foggy. He tried to remember Xanxus's face as a test of his memories, tried to trace Katsuki's features inside his head. He thought of Sawada too, how that was most definitely a boy, someone not that much younger than Midoriya himself.

"As of right now, Vongola Decimo is a young man." Nighteye pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. "I know there are many questions that we still need to sort out and many of our…people of interests are currently missing or out of our jurisdiction but we just wanted you to know that it's confirmed All For One is dead."

"And we're just leaving Shigaraki to be locked in a mafia prison?" A small part of Midoriya said that was for the better. Shigaraki was still alive wasn't he? If they battled, Midoriya knew from the essences inside him that he would have to kill Shigaraiki or ended up being killed by Shigaraki.

That was the only way to end everything.

The adults stayed quiet for a minute and eventually, All Might sighed. His hand landed on Midoriya's shoulder, patting him lightly.

And Midoriya understood that their roles in the matter ended when Shigaraki got dragged into the abyss by chains.

2

The aftermath of a battle weren't always fun but some of them were more tolerable than others.

Most of the mafia pulled out of Japan as soon as the battle against All For One was won. While the heroes and HPSC were still disorganized, the police scrambled, and the government too busy with the aftermath of the mess, none of the mafia decided to stick around. Katsuki went back to Italy with Varia while Tsunayoshi's group along with Mrs. Sawada were sent to Mafia Land, a special resort of ceasefire for the mafia to relax. CEDEF didn't want them to be in Japan in case the Hero Commission had other plans.

Of course, it was just a precaution. Apparently the MLA also attacked the Hero Commission and suffered damages. It might be a few more days until any law enforcement could come back to the negotiation

table with them. The heroes had their hands full with clearing the aftermath of battle and all the reconstruction or search and rescue efforts needed.

Reborn also had a few more plots he was brewing. At least, that was what Katsuki inferred from the last time they talked while everybody was being extracted out of Japan.

UA was closed anyways so now Katsuki was just enjoying a vacation that might turn permanent if talks went south later on. His connection to Vongola was exposed, which meant if he stayed, there was a high chance of him being used against his family.

But that was a problem he could worry about when the weekend was over.

Dressed in T-shirt and joggers, Katsuki shoved chocolate ice cream into his mouth as Bel and Fran both reached their spoons into the bucket in his lap. The three of them were too lazy to bicker so they all ate silently, each scooping out a flavor of ice cream from the three-in-one family sized bucket. They were gathered on a sofa, facing the giant hologram screen split into different sections. Squalo was having coffee by the dining table behind them while Levi and Lussuria ate breakfast at the other end of the table.

The maids took Eri out to the garden to play already. It was a nice morning, with the warmth of the sun spilling into the room through the tall windows. They weren't in their normal dining hall either, this one faced east, soaking up the sun. White tablecloth with lace, roses dripping with dew in flower vases, and the smell of freshly hand brewed coffee with croissants.

"Isn't it a little early for ice cream?" Shoichi asked from his section of the hologram screen. He was having breakfast with Byakuran. The technician who was Byakuran's friend and subordinate in the future was only just a kid like Tsunayoshi right now. Brown hair and thick glasses, the dude was a complete nerd and his Italian rusty.

"Any time's a good time for ice cream," Katsuki answered. "And we just took out an ancient evil. I think we deserve it."

Shoichi's mouth twitched as if he had a toothache just from watching them eat. Without turning his head, he said, "...Byakuran, don't put marshmallows in my coffee."

"But it would taste a lot better," the white haired mafia whined. It

looked like they were eating in a garden and there was the tip of a mansion's roof in the back.

"No, it woundn't." Now Shoichi looked like he needed medicine for stomach pain but he took a deep breath and started tapping into the more serious topics. "While you were fighting the villains, we intercepted the MLA's satellite broadcasts. They didn't manage to show your faces. The heroes from other schools capture the hacker on MLA's side. I think the Japanese police had someone good helping with the online stuff too so we let them handle the rest of the digital issues after you pulled out of the battlefield."

That was good news.

But Shoichi coughed. "...Next time, can one of you please loop the rest of us in on the plan? I had no idea Byakruan was supposed to switch sides like he's playing ping pong."

"Xanxus agreed to the script. It was fun and interesting, wasn't it?" Byakuran leaned back into his chair. "And I can't really take over All For One's foreign underground network alone. At least, not through the same methods I used in other universes so teaming up with Varia wasn't such a bad idea."

Shoichi groaned, trying to drown himself with coffee.

"Vindice showing up was more surprising," Katsuki chewed on his spoon, feeling the curve of cold metal against his tongue while the chocolate taste lingered at the back of his mouth.

"That was Reborn's idea," Dino piped up. His background looked like an office with the thick curtains and heavy wooden furniture. His subordinates pushed a food cart in with an easy breakfast. Toast with jam and eggs and crispy bacon. "Shigaraki developing the eighth flame is unexpected but the Vindice is very happy about it."

"They have a backup battery now," chirped Byakuran happily while he enjoyed his marshmallow covered muffin. "Bermuda and the Vindice were supposed to keep their eighth flame burning to maintain the pacifiers under seal, now they can put Shigaraki to use."

He laughed, which was sadistically ironic. They were essentially forcing a villain that wanted nothing but destruction to maintain world peace, to burn his own vitality as fuel for keeping the foundation of the world stable.

“He won’t get out?” Katsuki asked.

Byakuran tilted his head. “The rewinding took the Six Realms from him so he can’t wander people’s dreams like Mukuro. I took one of his hands, Xanxus broke the other, which means his quirk is useless too. The Vindice will keep him canned in a water prison so he should be secured down there.”

Okay, that should cover most of their problems. Reborn had been supervising Tsunayoshi’s fight and decided to use the Ten Years Bazooka on the young Don when the situation wasn’t in their favor. Ten years later Tsunayoshi got rid of All For One’s original body and Shigaraki was useless now. The heroes have the Doctor that made all those Nomus and CEDEF was planning on taking the old man out so no more monsters could fight with flames would be made. The heroes left were of better use alive and the remainder of the MLA should keep the Japanese heroes and police busy for a while. The other world governments had to clean up after All For One’s accomplices wreaking havoc on their countries too.

Vongola and the rest of the mafia were safe.

Katsuki smacked Bel’s spoon away when the prince started flicking the strawberry ice cream towards Fran’s vanilla side. “Is somebody going to explain all of this to Tsunayoshi?”

“That’s up to Reborn to decide,” Dino sighed. His hair was slightly messy but his smile was charming. “What about you, Katsuki? Are you alright?”

“I’m fine.” His injuries were superficial. “Nothing Lussuria’s Sun flames and the doctors couldn’t fix.”

Even his arm was alright. Katsuki should really be coming up with better defenses because all his enemies seemed to love going for his arms the most during battle. It made sense since his explosions came from his hands but it was annoying.

“I mean your school situation.”

Katsuki shrugged. They would find a way. Even if it wasn’t UA, he could still be a hero. It just kind of sucked that he didn’t get to say goodbye to any of the idiots in his class. Maybe Aizawa would tell them he died honorably in battle. It was fine. He hoped All Might made it out alive. The No.1 hero was pretty beat up the last time Katsuki caught a glimpse of him. All Might was a good hero and

Katsuki at least respected his will to defend until his last breath. Aizawa too. Katsuki lost sight of his teacher during the later parts of the battle.

“Voi, brat! Go wake Boss.” Squalo yelled from the table. “We got work to do later.”

“Why don’t you go yourself?” Katsuki turned his head, waving his spoon up in protest. Fran found an opening to parry Bel’s spoon over the ice cream, which turned into a fencing match with spoons between the prince and the frog.

“It’s eight in the morning. Do I look like I have a death wish?”

“So you send me instead?”

“Yep.”

“Asshole!”

Shoving the ice cream bucket on the coffee table, Katsuki stole the bacon from Squalo’s plate before running out of the dining hall. He could hear Squalo talking with Byakuran and Dino about the nitty gritty details about how they were going to handle All For One’s legacy. The villain left many gray revenue streams and other useful stuff behind. While they would need to clean up the nasty portions before any of it could be of proper use, it was still a decent chunk of business. They would split the assets, selling off what needed to be sold and riding the tumors that were just burdens or not in line with Vongola’s codes.

For one, anything regarding human experimentation had to go.

That was part of the bargain with Mukuro.

Xanxus and Byakuran already reached an agreement on the split apparently but things could run smoother with the Cavallone familigia’s help. Katsuki wasn’t concerned about whether the three would fight over shares. It was extra spoils on top of ending a threat to their families and it was better to split up the villain’s legacy anyways so it was harder for the police to track.

God, he really was thinking more like a mafia than a hero now.

“Xanxus,” Katsuki called when he opened the door to his boyfriend’s room. There was no response, not that Katsuki expected one either. He

slipped into the room after making sure there weren't going to be anything dangerous flying his way.

Unexpectedly, Xanxus's bed was empty. Bester laid at the foot of the bed, stretched out over the rug.
Bester's tail brushed by Katsuki's ankle as he stepped past. Leaning down, Katsuki scratched the beast's chin, ruffling the fur on the underside of its majestic mane. He held Bester's left paw up to reveal the soft pads on its palm. They were pink and squishy to the touch, almost like a toy but warm. "Hey, Bester. Where's Xanxus?"

Bester turned its head towards the walk in closet. Xanxus came out, pulling on a suit jacket with velvet lining on the inside. A red tie dangled around his neck while the buttons of his vest were open. The fitted and sharp lines of the suit highlighted his height and strong form. Ironed trousers and polished leather shoes, he was handsomely dressed for business and possibly not the murderous kind. Or the *very* murderous kind, depending on the atmosphere.

Katsuki couldn't suppress the hint of a smile pulling at the corners of his mouth.

"What's with that stupid look?" Xanxus's hand landed on Katsuki's head roughly.

"Nothing." Katsuki tilted his head towards Bester, leaning his weight on the box animal while watching Xanxus finish dressing himself. When his boyfriend was done, Katsuki stood up and wrapped his arms around the taller man tightly. He buried his face against Xanxus's strong chest, feeling another's body heat against himself and listening to the rhythm of his love's heartbeat. "Where are you going?"

"Meeting with the old man. There's still some stuff that needs to be taken care of."

The Decimo's group. Katsuki wasn't sure what would happen. It would probably be easier to pull Tsunayoshi and his guardians out of Japan. They could start on learning about how to handle Vongola's business too but Katsuki doubted that Hibari would be willing to leave Namimori so easily.

As much as Xanxus hated it, the adults had to handle the clean up.

Katsuki said nothing since it wouldn't be wise to push Xanxus right before important meetings. Getting onto his tip toes, he planted a kiss on Xanxus's mouth. He felt a hand under his bum and his feet left the

ground, his lips pressed tighter against the man's. Katsuki was careful to not ruin Xanxus's hair. It wasn't a wet kiss filled with desire either, more so that they could feel the heat of another's skin as air was shared between their lungs. The beats of two hearts joined as one against Katsuki's eardrums, the signs of life so vivid under his touch.

They were alive.

That was the part after a battle Katsuki enjoyed the most. When the adrenaline rush faded and when nerves unwinded, while their muscles were still slightly sore and the atmosphere lazy with a cozy warmth and the joy of success…he wanted nothing more than to be close to the one he loved.

Then suddenly, the door flew open with a loud bang.

"Boss! Boss!"

Bel's voice pierced their ears before they even saw a hair of him. When Bel ran in, he had Fran tied up and hauled over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes and Eri under his armpit as if she was a briefcase.

The two kids swayed as both were dropped onto the carpet, dizzy from the royal impromptu rollercoaster ride.

"The Prince figured out how to keep Princess in UA!" Bel announced happily as he stopped before Xanxus, waving his arms around all excitedly. "Let's put on another show! It will be fun, Boss!"

"Cut to the point, trash." Xanxus let go of Katsuki.

"Victoire and Bakugou Katsuki are two different people. The heroes don't know better so let's use that to our advantage." Bel moved behind Katsuki, using the other teen like a human shield as he explained his plan. "Victoire got mad that Katsuki is getting all the attention and putting the Boss in danger, a risk to the family. So now the Lady of the castle is getting rid of the mistress. Boss was done with his plaything anyways. The mafia has a poor hero student locked up but when his former classmates found out, they broke him out of the evil bitch's jail!"

"Who the fuck are you calling an evil bitch?" growled Katsuki as he placed his hands over Eri's ears.

Bel promptly ignored Katsuki when Xanxus gave a curt nod to

continue on, “Let his class come to Italy for a trip and when Eri here is the bait. A few of them were involved with Eri’s case so they should know her face, if not, we can just give them a little push to piece the clues together. When they follow her, they will find Katsuki. After being betrayed and locked up, a heart-broken Bakugou Katsuki has more than enough reasons to help the heroes take down organized crime.”

He pulled out some files from thin air with a flick of his wrist as if doing a magic trick. They were all about raucous family members or sleazy mafia from smaller organizations associated with Vongola. Cancers, the lot of them. From Elders who laundered money for their own gains to rat’s asses who smeared Vongola’s honor with their filthy desires. They were the rot of this criminal empire that people knew existed.

The Don just hadn’t found a good way to get rid of them yet. Too interconnected, a long time core member of the organization, too much backlash would be generated from punishing them over “small mistakes”.

“He will need to show proof of loyalty to the Hero Commission so let him feed the law intel on these idiots that we need to get rid of,” Bel explained more. His voice was confident as he waved the paper around. “Sure, we’ll take a bit of heat and people are going to talk about how Boss picked the damn wrong side piece but think about all we can get out of this! We get rid of the bastards without needing assassination or painfully political long games, establish that Princess and Bakugou Katsuki are two different people so Boss still gets to date Victoire, Katsuki gets to finish school at UA, and we’ve now planted a mole within the hero organization! Well, not a mole *mole.* But if we have future rat that need to be taken care of, Katsuki can handle them.”

The royal assassin was talking so fast in Italian that Katsuki was sure Eri and even Fran (he was French) couldn't understand half of that. They stared up at the three of them, all confused and Eri was trying to hide herself behind Fran as much as possible. If it was weeks ago, Katsuki was pretty sure she would try to hide under the bed. Baby step improvements.

But that didn’t matter right now. Because Xanxus and Katsuki understood the prince’s plan.

“That’s…” Bullshit. Katsuki wanted to say but instead he

complimented, “good. Awfully dramatic and possibly the stupidest plan I’ve ever heard but it might be workable.”

Play the bad guy and everybody wins. Hell yeah, Katsuki was willing to give it a shot.

“Told you we would have this figured out! ” Bel hooked an arm around Katsuki’s neck, laughing and showing teeth as the edges of his lips split towards his earlobes. “What do you say, Boss? Is that enough to convince the old butts?”

He meant the Ninth and the Ninth generation guardians.

Xanxus scoffed, “Who do you think I am? Now get out of my room and start prepping.”

Sharing a glance with Bel, Katsuki could feel a smile mirroring the other teen’s working its way onto his face.

“Yes, Boss!”

Chapter End Notes

I wrote this with a happy undertone in mind through out.

Chapter 50: Chapter 45

Chapter Notes

> I've been so invested in other projects that I feel like I forgot how to write. LOL

1

Bel's script was easier said than done.

It wasn't like they could just send an invite to UA asking them to come to Italy for a relaxing trip. Nedzu would see right through it and the other heroes would certainly find it suspicious. So soon after the battle when it was known Katsuki had ties to the Italian mafia? Nedzu would have to have got his head kicked in by a mule to not be able to piece two and two together. Even if he didn't, what responsible educator would send his hero students to the world's largest mafia territory?

Besides, the heroes needed time to recover too. His classmates and teachers suffered different degrees of injuries, especially Deku. Katsuki remembered how hard the green haired teen had been fighting. He certainly wouldn't be up and ready for an international flight in the short term.

That gave Varia time to get things in order.

They needed a stage that wouldn't cause a huge disruption to the general population. They just had a battle with villains, there was no need to stir up more shit with regular heroes. That was a smear of Vongola's honor and absolutely a waste of unnecessary resources. Besides having some down time to themselves and to scrape together somewhat of a script, they also had to wait for the right opportunity to set things in motion.

After the battle, many countries sent their heroes to help Japan rebuild. The news was focused on a new tomorrow and reforms. Changes were bound to happen, especially with a bunch of higher ups in the Hero Commission injured by the villains. The mutants that participated in the MLA's riots also brought the voices of those unheard to the spotlight. Not to mention, there were other criminals that were still on the run. Too many things needed to be done, too much different politics and interests or just problems to be taken care of.

The hero students fought hard in the battle so they would be bathed under the media's attention. While UA could maintain the dorm system and keep the interference out, it wouldn't be impossible to incentivize Nedzu with an opportunity to give the students a relaxing time. CEDEF's intel said that UA was going to have a graduation for the current third years, which when combined with the hospital stays and rebuild would delay the start of the new school year.

Somewhere not in Italy but still in Europe. A nice and quiet place that wasn't on hostile mafia territory. The suggestion would have to sprung from genuine offers, one that wasn't influenced by outside forces or hinted through blackmail.

The right time. The right place.

A whisper of an idea.

But that wasn't something the Varia executives needed to or should be involved in. At this stage, they needed to stay out of the equation so that UA would take the bait.

Katsuki pulled the vanilla cake out of the oven, putting the burning hot tray on the counter to cool. At the other end of the kitchen island, Eri stood on the chair, whisking a bowl of cream. She was in another of Victoire's old dresses today, a casual summer dress that featured sailor blue and a white bow in the back. Lussuria had found a new hobby of modifying Katsuki's old clothing for Eri lately. His sewing machine finally had a purpose other than decorating his puppet collection again.

"Listen now," Fran said as he held up two identical bottles. The green haired boy was expressionless as he stared at Eri. "If you are making cake for me, you add this." He raised the bottle in his right hand. "If it's for the fake prince, you add this." The left this time.

"Don't you dare put Arsenic anywhere near my food," Katsuki huffed while snatching the bottle from Fran's right hand–the one that contained sugar to sprinkle into the cream. "Eri, ignore him. And Fran, go get us the chocolate from the freezer."

The boy slipped off his stool and ducked into the back room, leaving only a shadow of his apple shaped hat gliding over the door frame as he searched for the chocolates.

Katsuki felt a tug at his sleeve.

Eri lifted the whisk, showing him how the cream was at the right texture just as he told her. It had been months since Levi acquired her to Varia's castle. Although still quiet (both due to shyness and stumbling over words as she learned a new language), she has been more expressive physically lately. She was probably learning that the only way to get attention around this castle was to really get in people's faces too.

"Good job," Katsuki complimented and Eri lifted a smile. Her cheeks had rounded out and her skin was a slight redness to it from being out in the sun. There were a few apple trees in the garden that were giving fruit around this time of the year so the girl must be helping the kitchen staff pick apples after her exercises. They should give her more sunscreen later. "This is going to be a great cake."

A dark chocolate drizzle with coffee cream on top. Katsuki also froze some dark chocolate with coffee powder in the shape of coffee beans yesterday. Add a few pieces on top of the cream and they could maybe even make a rose of cream at the edge for decoration.

"Is Boss going to have some of the cake with us?" asked Eri while helping Katsuki fill the cream into the piping bags.

"He has work but we can bring him a piece for a little break. Do you think you can deliver the cake with me?"

She shivered a little–hesitant and nervous–but eventually, Eri nodded. "I want to play with the big cat after."

"Then get your grades up first or you're going to be Bester's snack."

Squalo's raspy voice came from behind them. He tossed a few pieces of stapled paper at a cleaner edge of the island. Eri's homework was always marked by one of the lower ranking Varia members–mostly whoever had spare time or wasn't on shift–so the red handwriting changed all the time. Eri was like a mouse seeing a cat, her small face twisted as if swallowing lemons as soon as she saw the red D- on the first page.

The swordsman yawned. His hair was loose and his white shirt was a bit crumpled. The man still had a glove over his prosthetic left hand but it was stained with dust and pen ink.

"What happened to you?" Katsuki tilted his chin towards the tangled knots at the tip of Squalo's long hair.

“Bel is too excited for his plan. Levi needs a new hobby. We’re planning traps, not trying to barbecue your classmates.”

“No beheading either, I hope.” The place they found was a manor near the countryside of France. It was old but not *that* old. Still, it was kind of funny to discover that there was an aged guillotine in the basement.

Fran came back in with the chocolates, setting them in front of Katsuki. “Me was looking forward to the guillotine idea. We can have the ghost of the head maid haunting the manor.”

“Stop trying to turn this script into a horror movie plot.” Squalo knocked him on the head before racing a hand over over Katsuki’s shoulder, swiping up a piece of chocolate. He leaned his weight on Katsuki and dropped a hand on Fran’s hat, forcing the boy still so he couldn’t run off. “If I have to tell the other trash to bring out Halloween chainsaws, those UA kids have to be fucking blind and deaf with brains leaking out their ears for them to believe in this crap.”

“Our Halloween chainsaws are the leftovers from cleaning up what we keep in the basement.” Blunt and dull, not really useful on the job anymore.

“Exactly. Our butter knives are sharper than that.”

“Eri! Oh, little Eri!” Lussuria’s voice sounded from the hall, getting louder as footsteps approached. He smiled when he noticed all of them in the kitchen. “There you are! Look, darling! I found Victoire’s bow collection. When you’re done here, come to my room and we can have your little runway.”

“If the police heard that, you’d be a person of interest in seconds,” Fran grumbled. He was very calm for his age, maybe a little too much that he could light people’s coats on fire while standing in line for general Varia meetings. He was a whole different kind of menace from Bel, which was probably why they were always at each other’s throats. “My teacher left me with a bunch of perverts.”

“That’s harsh, Little Fran.” Lussuria pouted.

“Pervert.” The boy pointed to Lussuria before counting off with the rest of his fingers. “Crazy prince. Ugly pervert. Long haired monster. Lazy tyrant. Incubus with anger issues.”

“Watch your mouth or no dessert for you,” Katsuki chided before turning back to Eri with a softer tone, “Isn’t that right, Eri?”

“Yes!” She nodded eagerly. Katsuki didn’t want her to pick up on the foul language or pointed speeches around the mafia this young. Not to mention, he didn’t want her Japanese to regress either. Learning too many bad words this early…even Xanxus might squint a little if Eri started shooting out swears that could raise Jesus before Easter.

They were Vongola. They needed to have more class than street urchins.

The cake was almost ready as Eri carefully placed the final piece of chocolate at the center. Fran cheered when Katsuki cut him a slice.

“Go do your homework after this,” Katsuki ordered the boy. “I’ve gotten six calls from Mafia School in the span of two days. Keep this up and we’re signing you up for the boarding portion of school.”

Since Squalo was busy, Varia’s second in command handed over a bunch of the more tedious work to Katsuki, which included dealing with school. It was quite the achievement, actually. The mafia had schools for their own children, where poisons and guns and all the other not so legal stuff were encouraged. At first they thought Fran might feel a little maladapted to this type of schooling since he was just a normal country boy before getting picked up by Vongola. However, maybe it was because he had ten years of memories stuffed into him like the rest of the Varia elites and Tenth Generation, he was pretty much thriving off on torturing his classmates.

Squalo had a similar experience when Bel was still in school. The prince was an absolute nightmare and only did his schoolwork when he felt like it. He only got serious when the teachers told him he could be done with school if he showed mastery in the subjects so they could let him skip grades.

In Katsuki’s opinion, the school just wanted to sack the crazy royal pain in the ass.

“Me thinks it’s unfair that she doesn’t have to go to school.” Fran pointed his fork at Eri between bites.

Squalo scuffed as he took a piece of cake from Katsuki. Plopping himself into a stool, he asked sarcastically, “How old are you and how old is she?”

Fran made a face but turned quiet.

“I don’t think little Eri is ready for school,” added Lussuria. He was

getting a pot of tea started to go with his cake. “She needs a few stun guns to keep those little rascals in line.”

“We’re not giving little shits any weapons until she’s fully literate.” Squalo shook his head. “I’m not writing her damage report for her.”

The rest of them chuckled while Eri looked around with a confused face. “What’s a damage report?”

“Paperwork,” grumbled Squalo miserably. Lowering the half a bite of cake back onto his plate, his features twisted as if his pancreas had burst. “Lots and lots of shitty paperwork.” His phone went off and the man made a shooing motion at Eri while checking his text. “Go bother Boss.”

“Come, Eri. Let’s deliver the cake to Xanxus.” Katsuki got a silver tray, plating the cake and a cup of Lussuria’s green tea on it.

The girl hopped off her seat, holding her hands out for the tray. “I’ll be careful.”

“Good luck, kids.” Lussuria waved at them.

They walked slowly, with Katsuki intentionally taking smaller steps to match Eri’s stride. The girl was careful and focused on not spilling the tea as they went up the stairs. When they made it to Xanxus’s office, Katsuki pushed the door open just a crack to check inside.

Xanxus was reading some files at his desk. There was a slight crease between his brows but judging by the curve of his scowl, he wasn’t in that foul of a mood.

Tapping Eri on the back lightly, Katsuki pushed the door fully open.

“B-Boss! We made cake!”

She almost bit her tongue trying to pronounce the Italian words but she did it. A full sentence in front of Xanxus without being ordered to speak!

Xanxus glanced up at Katsuki, who returned a smile. The Varia boss didn’t say anything as Eri walked closer while holding her breath. She stepped on the short stool beside Xanxus’s desk. The wooden stool was added since Eri had been fetching Xanxus his drinks. Katsuki wasn’t sure if he should be concerned that a six year old could recognize different wine bottles and recite the year and vineyard of each one

before she could even spell their names.

…It should be fine.

The bar was low since Eri came from a yakuza's basement but some days, Katsuki wasn't so sure if Varia was any higher.

Eri placed the cake and tea in front of Xanxus before hugging the empty tray against her chest. She stared at Xanxus, the hope and anticipation evident in her large round eyes.

"Tastes like shit," gruffed Xanxus after taking a bite. The line between his eyebrows didn't lessen and he still had a face that could scare Navy Seals into shitting in terror but Eri nodded while beaming bright.

"Lighten up a little won't you?" Chuckling, Katsuki threw himself onto Xanxus's lap, taking the fork from the man to take another piece of cake. He lifted the cake up to Xanxus's mouth. "We have kids and this is a cake, of course it's sweet."

"This is my castle, they should be accommodating me, not the other way around."

Rolling his eyes, Katsuki shoved the cake into Xanxus's mouth. With his other hand, he pinched Xanxus on the shoulder as he felt the mafia's hand pressed against the curve of his butt.

"Give this to Bel." Xanxus handed Eri some paper, gesturing for her to leave.

As soon as the girl left, Xanxus bared his teeth. "Are you trying to crush my clavicle? Also, there was at least ten pounds of sugar in that cake. What was she trying to do? Become the next Poison Scorpion?"

Gokudera's sister, Bianchi, had an unnatural talent to turn all of her cooking into poisonous weapons.

"Eri's hand slipped." Katsuki planted a kiss at the edge of the scar on Xanxus's forehead. He traced the edge of the marked skin down to the tip of his dark brows. Tossing the fork back on the plate, Katsuki leaned his head on Xanxus's shoulder. "She tried so don't waste her efforts. Fran loves this cake and even Squalo swallowed it down without swearing."

He could feel the man's warm hand travel up his spine, pressing

against the notches of his bones while Xanxus kissed him. The sweet taste lingered on Xanxus's tongue and Katsuki felt himself melting into the kiss.

Xanxus was right though. There was definitely too much sugar in the cake that even Katsuki's tongue was starting to go numb.

"Bunch of idiots," cursed Xanxus when they parted. The man picked up the tea and drained it in one go, trying to wash the aftertaste of sugar down. "I don't want Fran anywhere near the armory or my office if this is in his system."

Oh, the kid illusionist would be a hyperactive nightmare. Squalo would probably throw him into training with the lower Varia members in an attempt to burn the sugary fuel out of the kid. Katsuki actually felt kind of bad for Stain and the rest of Varia.

Just a little though.

"I'm with you on that," Katsuki laughed softly as he shifted his body to face Xanxus properly. Straddling Xanxus's lap, his legs dangled on either side of the office chair, toes just touching the wooden floor as he swung his feet. He wrapped his arms around Xanxus's neck and buried his face against his boyfriend's chest. There was a hand on the back of his head, fingers threaded between his hair and the weight of it comforting. "I'm going to take a nap. Be nice to Eri if she comes back. She wants to play with big kitties."

There was a grunt that sounded along the lines of "Bester's not a cat" before the noise of shuffling paper came. Katsuki's consciousness began to slip while accompanied by the occasional noise of pen dragging across paper and flipping pages. In his sleepy state, Katsuki could imagine Xanxus's writing. Unlike the man's usual rough exterior, his cursives were clean and practiced. The words accompanied Katsuki into slumber.

There was no better lullaby and sweeter dream.

2

Midoriya saw his hands decaying as he reached for Shigaraki's hands. Young Shigaraki's hatred originated from a house, beautiful and normal until…until everything crumbled.

The world was dying and there were just people who couldn't be saved. Shigaraki didn't want to be saved. Even if he wasn't All For

One's pawn, he was the villains' hero and destruction was the path he chose.

"If Spinner is alive, tell him that Shigaraki Tomura kept fighting for destruction until the bitter end."

Midoriya woke up with a startled gasp for air but he soon realized he hadn't escaped from his dreams. There was a boy in front of him. His hair was shaped oddly, with three spikes pointing skyward like a pineapple's leaves.

"Who–" the green haired teen started but then he remembered the cultural festival. This boy had shown up and Bakugou knew him. Squalo too.

He was mafia.

"I'm not mafia," the boy spat as if reading Midoriya's mind. "You don't need to know my name. I was just asked to deliver that message to you in exchange for information on how that stupid villain managed to transplant Six Realms onto himself successfully. Everybody who knew how to make that happen should be long dead."

He had an eye like Shigaraki's during the final battle. The red eye with the switching numbers instead of a human pupil.

"Dead…?"

"Yeah. The experiment only worked on me. Then I killed everybody involved in making that happen as revenge." He sat down in front of Midoriya, gesturing for the hero to sit too. Their surroundings changed from gray mists and rough stones to the meeting room of past One For All users that Midoriya saw before.

There was a corner of ruins where eight chairs were placed in a circle. The ground outside of this corner of the room was a murky stream. The previous seven OFA holders sat in their chairs, watching Midoriya and the boy. All Might was still a visage shaped by flames.

"Rokudo Mukuro," Nana sighed. "You are the illusionist who fought All For One at the prison alongside Vongola Decimo."

They could feel it. The connection between One For All and All For One was stronger in this metaphysical world than what Midoriya felt physically in his conscious state.

“We met earlier than that,” Kudo muttered while rolling his eyes but he was glaring at Midoriya when he said that. “You were the one who was trying to mess with that idiot’s head at the park.”

“Well, you didn’t put up much of a fight inside his head so I assumed I had permission.” Rokudo shrugged without a care in the world. “I didn’t do anything but remove a few filters from his mouth. Kufufu, it was quite a show.”

“W-wait! It was because of you?” Midoriya’s eyes widened when he realized what they were talking about. His outburst at Namimori park…that was because of this kid? Belatedly, Midoriya felt his cheeks burning up because after everything that happened, he finally had time to pull the tangled mess of his thoughts into manageable threads. The previous OFA users didn’t have much time to talk to him casually before, not with the battles and all their quirks coming into play but now, they were all looking at Midoriya with a strange look.

A fist landed on his head and the pain felt just as real as when a punch landed in real life.

“I’ve been wanting to do that. Boy, I don’t even know what to say to you.” Banjo shook his head as he pulled his fist back. “We try to let you have your privacy and such and hey, I get it. We’ve had crushes and we’ve all been teenagers once but boy oh boy…that was just not right. It’s a struggle and a heartbreaking process to accept rejections. The way you went about it was completely out of hand and iIf I was that Bakugou kid, I’d have thrown you out a window at one point.”

“I’m sorry…” Midoriya felt himself shrinking. He wanted to hide but there was nowhere else to go. The other users took turns expressing their disappointment. From yelling at him to the silent look of disapproval, Midorya felt like rotten fish in the trash.

Yoichi coughed, calling everyone’s attention to him. “I trust you understand why you’re wrong now?”

“Y-yeah.” Midoriya’s head hung low. “I say I love him but I didn’t listen to him. I was only thinking about my feelings and how I think things should be. That’s a very selfish kind of love. Kacchan would give up his hero career for Xanxus and the other mafia because that is what was right. He wouldn’t jeopardize them just because he was in a tough spot. I know how important being a hero is to him. He’s like me. That’s our dream. Everything we’ve worked for our whole lives. After seeing that, I started wondering if I could do that too. If I would

be willing to give up being a hero if Kacchan asked. Not because it could save his life or because there is something else on the line, just because it's for him. Xanxus didn't ask him to do that. If Kacchan didn't do that, Xanxus wouldn't be in imminent danger either. He's a villain and I don't even know how many heroes it would take to bring him down. Even if the heroes don't go after him now, they will keep trying in the future."

Slowly, he wiped his face and held back tears before lifting his head to look Yoichi in the eyes.

"I can't do the same," he whispered. "I don't love like he did. I don't love him the same amount as he could love another person back."

"You're a slow learner and it took relating to the same dream for you to realize your wrongs. Having morals and empathy are different from being able to walk in another person's shoes." Yoichi sighed. The man was slim and his bangs fell in front of his face but the man had kind eyes. "You're young and you have done many stupid things, Midoriya. For a second there, I thought Toshinori made the wrong choice. You… you reminded me of my brother."

All For One didn't love. He only knew how to possess.

Midoriya's head hung low again in shame.

"That's it? You've realized your wrongs and blah blah blah?" Rokudo suddenly interjected. He was trying to keep a dour expression but he just looked bored and if not a little let down by the lack of heated violence. "I'm not on Bakugou's side but I think you should at least dangle Midoriya here over that edge for five minutes. If you like, I can also throw in a nightmare combo free of charge."

"Kid, you're the type that wishes the world would burn down, aren't you?" Banjo squinted at Rokudo and the teen flashed the man a crooked smile. "Feel like we've met another bastard like you before."

"Demon Spade visited this place once," Nana reminded the rest of the ghosts from the past. "He's Vongola Primo's cloud guardian. Unlike All For One who kept himself alive through quirks and science, Demon Spade only had a conscience when he wandered in. He was traveling through people's dreams just like this kid here."

"That was my fault." Shinomori placed a hand on his forehead as if regretting a hangover. The fourth user of OFA sighed in exasperation. "Sorry guys. I don't even know how he slipped in. He was looking for

a body and I guess this one was already too crowded for him."

"Sounds like him," Rokudo quipped. "Tried to take my body too but he's dead for good now. You can thank Vongola Decimo for that."

"Vongola Decimo…isn't that–" Midoriya felt his mouth turning into the same flames like All Might's and he couldn't talk any more. Vongola Decimo was Sawada Tsunayoshi. There was no mistake in it. The strange people around the brown haired teen, the powers that weren't in his quirk registry, and all the odd things that happened all pointed to that truth.

Rokudo smiled at him, a curve that looked more like the painted lines on a horror movie doll's mask than one that contained real human emotions.

"You can put two and two together in that puny little brain of yours," Rokudo said gently but his eyes told a different story. "But some secrets should remain secrets and not blurted out like an illy thought out love confession from a certain hero, okay?"

Midoriya shut right back up.

"Hey, stop playing with him." Kudo stepped in, blocking Rokudo from view. "This isn't your domain either, illusionist."

The will of seven heroes was what maintained this realm. The flames of One For All burned through the river of time, still shining bright within Midoriya even if the final battle was over.

"That power of yours," Rokudo said with a tilt of his head as if in thought. "It can only be passed to people with no quirks, right? Have you ever wondered what would happen if someone with one of our flames could do with One For All?"

Everybody was looking at him. Tension thickened in the air as another edge of the ruins chipped off, sinking into the chaos but Rokudo's smile only grew larger.

Yoichi closed his eyes as he leaned back into his chair. "If there comes a time for the need, it is what is meant to be but so long as we are here, we will do what we can to guide the future."

His answer didn't amuse Rokudo. The boy's smile fell and he took a large step back with a shake of his head, he mumbled, "…Heroes."

Rokudo began to fade. He was just dropping off a message from Shigaraki and Midoriya assumed the other images that the illusionist showed him was a bonus. There might be some curiosity involved too since he knew about the previous OFA users and after meeting them all, he was satisfied with this short interaction. He seemed to just be hanging around to meet people, whether alive or not.

“Wait!” Midoriya found his mouth again. “Kacchan! Is Kacchan okay? Will he…will we ever see him again?”

Rokudo glanced at him, indifferent to the pleading hope in Midoriya’s eyes. “Who knows? Why don’t you go find out for yourself?”

He vanished, shattering into a thousand pieces of crystal that got swept under the stream. Even leaving, he had to get in a last scare. Midoriya wasn’t sure what he meant but according to the previous OFA users, that was just how all illusionists were. They had other things they wanted to discuss with Midoriya, which forced him to shove any thoughts relating to Bakugou Katsuki to the deepest corner of his mind.

Still, he couldn’t help but wonder what Rokudo had meant.

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